THE·TEMPLE
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HANDBOOKS

·THE·
RELIGIONS
OF·INDIA
BRAHMANISM
& BUDDHISM

BY·REV.ALLAN
MENZIES D.D.

LONDON·J·M·DENT·AND·CO.

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OF BIBLE HANDBOOKS

EDITED BY
OLIPHANT SMEATON, M.A.

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BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM

The Trial of the Bow.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of religions outside of Christianity has now overcome many of the prejudices which hindered its earlier growth. It has no longer to contend with the suspicion that the effort to understand other religions will make us attach less value to our own. On the contrary, the tendency of the study of religions is seen more and more to strengthen the hold of Christianity upon us. The student of this science is led to see very clearly how all men need religion and have provided themselves in one way or another with access to the powers above them. But it happens very rarely that even the most sympathetic study of a foreign religion leads anyone to prefer it to his own. In contemplating other faiths, we do, it is true, become aware that some features of Christianity are stronger than others and do more to qualify it to spread over the world. We have to distinguish between the essence of Christianity, in which lies the secret of its power, and its accidental features. That surely must confirm and not weaken the tie that binds us to Christ.

In this little book we are to give a brief account of the religions of India. Anyone, it is true, who has

been in India and has seen the numerous temples and the infinite idolatry and sacrifice of that land will tell us that it is impossible to set forth the subject at all in such a book as this. No doubt it is impossible to treat the whole of it in our limits, or even to catalogue its leading figures and its noted shrines. But the same is true of any religion. Of Christianity it is most true that no brief statement can represent the whole of it. Yet it is possible to give a Hindoo or a Chinaman a short statement of the Christian religion. To do this one does not dwell on the different beliefs of Christian sects, nor on the varieties of Christian worship, nor on the different stages of civilisation and standards of morality to be found in Christian lands. One dwells on what Christians have in common, on that in which they all believe and to which all look back as the beginning of their faith. We describe Christianity in fact, by setting forth its origin, by giving an account of the life and the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. A full account of Christianity must no doubt take account of its sects, its heresies, its marvellous development in history, and all the strange forms it has assumed. These all belong to the subject, but in giving a brief statement of what Christianity itself is, we cannot attend to them.

With the religion of India it is the same. Here, too, no one can know the detail of the subject. The religious rites of India, the gods who are worshipped there, the beliefs held about them, the philosophies in which they have been rationalised, made into symbols,

disregarded, all this can only be set forth in books of great size and by armies of specialists. When asked to give an account of the religion of India in a small volume, we must turn to the origins and try to furnish some short statement of that which lies at the beginning of Indian faith, of that to which believers in India naturally turn as Christians do to the facts and doctrines recorded in the Gospels.

In the case of India, however, the origins are not so clear and simple as in that of Christianity. Indian religion flows not from one clear source only, but from several. Three different types of historical religion have existed in India, sprung from three different beginnings, each of which is amply attested by the sacred literature to which it gave rise. First there is the worship of the heavenly beings brought before us in the Vedic hymns, a worship elaborated in a stupendous sacrificial system, in the formation and administration of which the writers of these hymns were themselves engaged. Secondly, there is the ascetic and contemplative piety which arose when the worship of the Vedic deities decayed and the record of which is deposited in the more philosophical and later sacred books of the Brahmans, especially the Upanishads. Thirdly, there is Buddhism with its new principle of attachment to the person of the founder, the record of which is deposited in the Buddhist scriptures. True, Buddhism is not now a living religion in India; it was driven from the land of its birth in the early centuries of our era. It has a set of books of its

own, and can to a certain extent be studied separately. But its origin and early growth is part of India's religious experience, and even the briefest account of Indian religion must deal with it. This preliminary statement of the great steps in the history of Indian piety shows at once how long and how interesting is the story here brought before us. In no other land can the successive ages of religion as it grows from infancy to manly strength and then to weakness and decay, be so well seen; and it is this that makes Indian religion so important to the student of the world's faiths, and so full of lessons of the greatest moment for all who care in a broad and generous way for human faith and piety.

The subject divides itself into three parts:—

1. Vedism, the early Aryan religion of India.

2. Brahmanism, the religion of speculation and asceticism.

3. Buddhism, the simple religion of personal attachment, taking the place of these.

I

The Religion of the Vedas

We have, in the first place, to speak of the Vedas and the religious system of which they tell us; and we must begin by explaining what the books themselves are.

The religious literature of India opens with four collections of *hymns* meant to be used at sacrifices. These are the Vedas proper, and the oldest of them is the *Rigveda*, which contains the poems from which our earliest historical information as to the Aryans in India is derived. The other collections (*Samhitas*) of sacrificial hymns (*mantras*) are the *Samaveda*, consisting of liturgical songs; the *Jajurveda*, consisting of sacrificial formulæ; and the *Atharvaveda*; the last consists for the most part of charms and incantations, and is the great source of our knowledge of the popular beliefs and superstitions of ancient India.

The period when the hymns were composed is placed by Mr Max Müller, who by his publication of "The Sacred Books of the East," did more than any

one else to bring them to the knowledge of English-speaking peoples, at 1000-800 B.C.; but other scholars place it several centuries earlier. The writers of the hymns describe how they were naturally incited and led to compose them; by later generations, however, the hymns were regarded, as has happened in other religions also, as having been directly inspired. Around these hymns other religious literature afterwards grew up.

The "Brahmanas," one or more of which is devoted to each of the Samhitas, are explanatory works, entering into the significance of the various parts of the sacrifices in connection with which the hymns were used and giving directions for their proper celebration. These also came in time to be regarded as inspired (*sruti*, heard). The same view was held of a later and very different class of books: the speculative treatises spoken of above in connection with the second great movement of Indian religion, namely, the "Upanishads." These also belong to the period after that of the hymns. The "Sutras" or short directions for sacrifices and various rites were not held to be "sruti" inspired, but "*smriti*," recollections or traditions, and to the latter class belong also the divine and heroic legends and epics of which India possesses no small store, such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

The hymns of the Rigveda stand first in order and are by far the most important of all the sacred books of India. We learn more from them than from any other source as to the beginning and the early

character of Indian religion. When these hymns were composed, the wars and struggles were still remembered, which accompanied the entrance into India of the conquering Aryan tribes. These tribes came into India from the north-west, from the highlands of Iran. The similarity in many points of the Persian and Indian religions, bears witness of a period when these two branches of the Aryan race had dwelt together, after the others had taken their departure to enter Europe and settle on the Danube, in the lands north of the Alps, in Greece and Italy and the far distant west. The settlers in India with whom we have to do, had to fight their way to the new seats they occupied there. It is high up in the Punjaub or five-river country, between the Jumna and the Ganges that we first see them. Their struggles with the former population of the country were not forgotten. They did not extirpate these earlier settlers; did not even make an end of their civil institutions, far less of their religion, but lived among them as a superior and governing race. Many superstitions which are not known to the Vedas, but which overspread India in later times may have belonged to the pre-Aryan inhabitants, and after being submerged for a time by the wave of conquest, emerged again in later times from obscurity.

The conquerors never became quite settled, but kept moving on in stately order as new tribes pressed forward behind them. That they were fair-haired, while the inhabitants of the land were swarthy, is a

trait often dwelt on in the hymns. Cattle and horses were the main part of their wealth. They travelled with all their possessions, the women and children and goods being conveyed in wheeled carriages. They were arranged socially in tribes, and the tribes in families; the Aryan families, however, being patriarchal, *i.e.* containing not only one married pair as with us but also the wives and children of the sons. The warriors (*Uspatriyas*) were the ruling class of a tribe; whether the later caste distinctions of *Vaisyas* (farmers) and *Sudras* (servants) were formed at this early time is doubtful. We have to think accordingly of a set of tribes of superior civilisation, finding their way slowly from the higher valleys of the Punjaub to the lower ground; the inhabitants of the country combining only on rare occasions and ineffectively to oppose their progress, and soon retreating before them, or remaining beside them as their vassals.

These tribes brought with them into India their gods, their sacrifices, their priests, their mode of sacred song. In these particulars they have much in common, as was indicated above, with their brethren of Iran, among whom the religion of the Zendavesta grew up as that of the Vedas in India. Much came to them no doubt in the new land they entered. They found in it new gods; their sacrifices grew more stately, their hymns longer and full of new allusions, yet their sacrifices and hymns at their highest development do not deny their kindred with those of Persia. What we have to recognise therefore in the religion

of the Vedas, is fresh growth under new conditions from the old root, a fresh formation of belief, sacrifice and poem from the old Indo-Iranian stock.

The hymns, however, were composed by a set of men whose very existence tells of more settled times than those of the invasions. They tell us of families of singers, whose business it is to produce poems for use at a sacrifice, and to see to the proper recital of these poems at the solemn occasion. One such family professes one kind of poem, another another kind; one devotes itself to the service of one god, another of another. Some of these poets are to a certain extent court functionaries; they are attached to the leading family of a tribe, and the sacrifices to which they contribute poems are acts done by the chief as representing his tribe, and therefore to some extent public solemnities. These men, moreover, are priests as well as poets. They are experts in the method of sacrifice, and while it is not yet the case that sacrifice cannot be offered without them, for the old tradition still ruled that the head of a house could sacrifice, or the head of a clan, and in humbler life sacrifice was regularly offered by the father, they are making themselves more and more indispensable. The hymns they put in circulation, and which tend to become the sacred literature of the country, praise the prince or the householder who employs a sacrificing poet to act for him, and who rewards him handsomely. It came to be believed more and more that the hymn was an essential part of the sacrifice, which could not prove

effectual without it, and from this it followed that on any considerable occasion a new poem must be provided. Some of the sacrifices were very elaborate. A sacrifice of three days was not uncommon ; we hear of one which took a year to transact. And as sacrifice became more grand and complicated, the ideas connected with it grew till it came to be regarded as a mystery, of which only the expert, perhaps only a whole band of experts, could ensure the correct performance.

What are the beings who are worshipped in these splendid rites ? They are many and various. A few of them can be traced back to the common Aryan inheritance before the migrations, but most of them are peculiar to Indian religion, and whether Aryan or not in origin, first rose to prominence in the new country. Some again may be gods of the land, who were worshipped by the older inhabitants, and rose into prominence again after being put out of sight. Of the Vedic gods in general, it may be said that they are Nature gods ; parts of the outward world or processes of Nature personified, endowed with feelings, desires and powers like those of man, equipped with full measure of attributes and so made into vast and active figures which partly conceal what they were at first. The gods India possesses in common with the other Aryan nations are but few ; Professor Max Müller has told what there is to tell of them in his Hibbert lectures, which everyone should read who is interested in this subject.

Dyaus-pitar is the Sanscrit for the Jupiter of Italy, the Zeus pater of Greece. In India he is not a prominent figure; when we first get sight of the gods of India, his period of activity is over; he is a being who has been worshipped in the past, and is thought of as the great power behind and above all gods. None of the hymns is addressed to him, and but little active worship is directed to him; he is superseded by gods of a younger generation and stronger local colour. Thus the hymns supply only indirect evidence of the time when the Aryans addressed their prayers to Heaven Father, and solicited him directly for benefits.

The myth also of Dyaus and Prithivi, heaven and earth, the pair from whose union men and all living beings come forth, is found in the beliefs of the Indians as of many other races, both Aryan and Non-Aryan. But this, too, is in the background and has no practical effect on worship.

The Vedic gods proper are personifications of the sun, of the moon, of the dawn, of fire in its heavenly or in its earthly appearance, of the storm, of the winds. It is possible for the scholar to collect from the hymns the attributes and characteristics connected with each of them, but he will not attain in this way to a clear and distinct character for each figure. They have very little legend connected with them, and remain indefinite and vague. What is said of one of them, moreover, is often found to be said of another, or of several others. This shows that they cannot all have grown up at the same

time, or in the same neighbourhood. Their rise and fall may have been in part political; as a tribe grew strong its god would become prominent and be exalted as other gods had been before. Or an alliance of two tribes might lead to a conjunction of their gods—a very common phenomenon in the history of Indian deities, and each of the pair would then assume some of the character of the other till they came to be very much alike.

There is no organisation in the Indian Pantheon; sometimes one god is the chief and the greatest, sometimes another; they do not form a family or sit in council together like the gods of Homer and the Eddas; it is a worship of one god at a time, first one god comes forward into the first place, then another. This is what is described by Professor Max Müller by the phrase *Kathenotheism*, the worship of one god at a time. The Indians of the hymns are not monotheists in any strict sense. They are worshippers in general of one god, but they believe in the existence of others, and worship may come to direct itself to one of these in his turn.

But it is time to introduce to the reader some of these gods in person, and to give some specimens of the hymns which were written in their honour. We shall give examples of Indian gods at three stages of their growth; firstly, of gods of the most primitive character, who show their natural basis most unmistakably, and in whom moral attributes are least developed; secondly, of the distinctively national gods

of India, who are to some extent moral beings; and thirdly, of the later gods who are the offspring of reflection.

(1) *Nature Gods Proper.*—First among these stand the sun-gods, and of the sun-gods Surya is the most natural and primitive. What is said of him is obviously spoken under the powerful impressions made on the minds of men of the early world by the great orb of day; his glorious shining, his splendid course, his daily recurring drama. The sun was regarded as a living being with human feelings, and imagination was allowed to play about his majestic person. Accordingly, he is described as golden; we hear of his wheel, of his chariot, of his white horse, of his eagle, of his eye. The ever-repeated wonder of his rising and setting, and his alternate appearance with the moon in the sky, were fitted of themselves to suggest devotion. And there is no need to prove how readily a story would be woven about such a theme; how, for example, as in the hymn quoted below, the sun would be regarded as a hero, the blushing dawn, Ushas, as a maiden, and the sun be spoken of as chasing the dawn.

The following translation, as well as some others in this chapter, is taken from "Metrical Translations from Sanscrit Writers," by Dr J. Muir (Trübner).

By lustrous heralds led on high
The omniscient Sun ascends the sky,
His glory drawing every eye.

All-seeing sun, the stars so bright,
Which gleamed throughout the sombre night,
Now scared, like thieves slink fast away
Quenched by the splendour of thy ray.
Thy beams to men thy presence show,
Like blazing fires they seem to glow.
Conspicuous, rapid, source of light,
Thou makest all the welkin bright.
In sight of gods and mortal eyes
In sight of heaven, thou scal'st the skies.
Bright god, thou scann'st with searching ken
The doings all of busy men.
Thou stridest o'er the sky; thy rays
Locate and measure out, our days;
Thine eye all living things surveys.
Seven mild mares thy chariot bear
Self-yoked, athwart the fields of air,
Bright Surya, god with flaming hair.

Of other sun-gods we may mention Savitri, Pushan, and Vishnu. Pushan has more detail attached to his figure. He is described as bearded and toothless, and as driving in a carriage drawn by goats. He is specially the patron of cattle and the guardian of paths, a guide to the traveller and one who finds again what has been lost. The three steps of Vishnu, which carry him through the whole of heaven, are thought to connect him with the sun in his daily course.

Many of the Vedic deities are held to have been

originally moon gods, and to have parted in time with their native character. Yama, for example, who receives departed souls, is to be regarded in the light of the primitive belief, attested in many of the hymns, that the souls of the dead went to the moon. Many passages about Agni can be referred to the moon, though Agni is certainly in general the God of Fire, and the sacrificer among the gods. Soma often appears to have been a moon god; but Soma is also the juice of the plant of that name, a rare and intoxicating liquor which formed the liquid part of many of the sacrifices; of him we shall have to speak again.

Of Ushas, the dawn, the following hymn tells us all that is wanted:—

To Ushas, the Indian Aurora

Hail Ushas, daughter of the sky,
Who borne upon thy shining car,
By ruddy steeds from realms afar,
And ever lightening, drawest nigh.

Thou sweetly smilest, goddess fair,
Disclosing all thy youthful grace,
Thy bosom bright, thy radiant face,
The lustre of thy golden hair.

But closely by the amorous sun
Pursued and vanquished in the race,
Thou soon art locked in his embrace,
And with him blendest into one.

Fair Ushas, though through years untold
Thou hast lived on, yet thou art born
Anew on each succeeding morn,
And so thou art both young and old.

When thou dost pierce the murky gloom,
Birds flutter forth from every brake,
All sleepers as from death awake,
And men their myriad tasks resume.

Some, prosperous, wake in listless mood,
And others, every nerve to strain
The goal of wealth or power to gain
Or what they deem the highest good.

But some to holier thoughts aspire,
In hymns the gods immortal praise,
And light, on earthly hearths to blaze,
The heaven-born sacrificial fire.

Bright goddess, let thy genial rays
To us bring stores of envied wealth
In kine and steeds, and sons with health,
And joy of heart, and length of days.

A being of a somewhat different order now comes before us. The gods of India, like those of Greece, felt the breath of advancing thought. The Hindoo early felt the need of a being to worship who had a more universal sway than that of the sun and moon, a being who presided not only over a department of the world, but over the whole world. And in the rule of such an omnipotent and all-pervading being as the

mind of the nation was groping for, the early gods, divine, yet limited in scope and character, could with difficulty seem natural and at home. Along with this intellectual need there was the growing ethical desire for divine communion such as the individual could enjoy, not only at a sacrifice, but at any time and throughout his life. These deeper needs are not without their witness even in very early hymns, where we find not only the effort to magnify a particular god as highly as possible and to see combined in him every possible power and excellence, but also the search after a being truly almighty and universal, comprising in himself all the gods, and coequal with the universe. These tendencies grew stronger rather than weaker as time went on, and ended at last in accomplishing the break up, for the more thoughtful part of the nation, of the old Pantheon, and the introduction by the side of the old worship of a new style of religion. This early impulse towards a pure moral monotheism, is represented by the figure of Varuna. This deity used to be thought to be the same as the Uranus, heaven, of the Greeks, but the identification is doubtful. Varuna is a heavenly being who looks down and witnesses all that goes on upon the earth. If he was originally the sun, as many of the hymns suggest, in others he is a being not seen himself who sends forth the sun on his daily course and who has eyes everywhere. He is said to have created all things and to have a universal rule. The hymns addressed to him resemble more than any others the Psalms of the Bible,

both from the exalted character of the god, who is free from every doubtful association, and because of the feelings of penitence and of moral aspiration expressed on the part of the worshipper. The following verses will help the reader to understand how near Indian thought here came to the belief in a being like the god of the Old Testament, both full of energy and free from every stain of passion.

Varuna

Each morn when Ushas starts from sleep,
He mounts his car, which gleams with gold,
All worlds before him lie unrolled
As o'er the sky his coursers sweep.

The righteous lord the sceptre wields,
Supreme, of universal sway;
His law both men and gods obey;
To his decree the haughtiest yields.

He spread the earth and watery waste;
He reared the sky; he bade the sun
His shining circuit daily run;
In him the worlds are all embraced.

. . . . .

The path of ships across the sea,
The soaring eagle's flight he knows;
The course of every wind that blows
And all that was or is to be.

. . . . .

This mighty Lord who rules on high
  Though closely veiled from mortal gaze
  All men's most secret acts surveys;
He, ever far, is ever nigh.

Two think they are not overheard
  Who sit and plot as if alone;
  Their fancied secrets all are known
Unseen the god is there, a third.

Whoe'er should think his way to wing,
  And lurk unknown beyond the sky;
  Yet could not there elude the eye
And grasp, of Varuna the King.

. . . . .

He marks the good and ill within
  The breath of men; the false and true
  Discerns with never-erring view;
He hates deceit, chastises sin.

Absolve us from the guilt we pray
  Of all the sins our fathers wrought
  And sins which we commit in thought
And speech and act, from day to day.

From dire disease preserve us free,
  Nor doom us to the house of clay
  Before our shrivelling frames decay;
A good old age yet let us see.

The distinctively *national* gods of the Aryan settlers

in India were Indra, Soma and Agni, and before the lively character and proceedings of these beings, Varuna lost vigour and came to be less thought of. Soma, while originally a moon-god, is at a later period the personification of the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant, spoken of above; and his worship may have originated in a district where this plant was found, and was early used for sacrificial purposes. As Soma was pressed and offered at a sacrifice of frequent occurrence, called the Soma sacrifice, religious thought was much occupied with the mode of the production of the liquor and its properties. And as Soma was regarded as a god (this feature is common to Vedic and Iranian religion, where Homa is the same) all the details of its preparation were interpreted mystically, what was done on earth had its sacred and eternal counterpart in heaven. Thus it comes that the ninth book of the Rigveda is filled with hymns addressed to Soma, who in this particular has a unique position among the gods. The sentiment of these hymns is not one to appeal to the world we live in. Intoxication is their theme; the elevation of those priests and poets and worshippers who assisted at the sacrifice, and the intoxication of the gods to whom it was offered. The juice was somewhat of a rarity, and only in connection with sacrifices was it prepared. And it was believed to impart vigour to gods as to men; they needed it in fact to evoke their energy and enable them to exert themselves on behalf of the worshippers who had thus made them happy.

Agni, the god of fire, though also originally connected with the moon, is also an element of sacrifice; it is this that distinguishes him from other solar or lunar beings, and brings him into prominence. He is the altar flame which lays hold on the butter and the savoury flesh and carries them up to the sky to present them to the gods. He is therefore the great divine priest of the Vedic sacrifice; a being who exists in heavenly regions, from which he looks down, pure and unmoved himself, on human strivings, and also in and under the earth where he is the inspirer of all energy and growth. But it is his appearance at the altar, where he is produced by the rubbing together of two pieces of wood, that is most dwelt on.

To Agni, the God of Fire

Great Agni, though thine essence be but one,
Thy forms are three; as fire thou blazest here,
As lightning flashest in the atmosphere,
In heaven thou flamest as the golden sun.

It was in heaven thou hadst thy primal birth;
But thence of yore a holy sage benign
Conveyed thee down on human hearths to shine,
And thou abid'st a denizen of earth.

Sprung from the mystic pair by priestly hands
In wedlock joined, forth flashes Agni bright;
But—O ye heaven and earth, I tell you right,—
The unnatural child devours the parent brands.

. . . . .

Thou, Agni, art our priest, divinely wise,
In holy science versed; thy skill detects
The faults that mar our rites, mistakes corrects,
And all our acts completes and sanctifies.

Thou art the cord that stretchest to the skies,
The bridge that spans the chasm, profound and vast
Dividing earth from heaven, o'er which at last
The good shall safely pass to paradise.

. . . . .

Preserve us, lord, thy faithful servants save
From all the ills by which our bliss is marred;
Tower like an iron wall our homes to guard,
And all the boons bestow our heart can crave.

And when away our brief existence wanes,
When we at length our earthly homes must quit,
And our freed souls to worlds unknown shall flit,
Do thou deal gently with our cold remains;

And then thy gracious form assuming, guide
Our unborn part across the dark abyss,
Aloft to realms serene of light and bliss,
Where righteous men among the gods abide.

Indra, more than any other the national god of the Aryans of India, is a being who descends from the sky and like so many others was first connected with the sun. There is more legend attached to him than to most of these deities; tales are told of his extraordinary energy even when an infant, of his killing

his father, and of the constant conflict he wages, attended by the Maruts, the wind gods, against Vrittru, the demon of drought, who has driven off the heavenly cows, the clouds, and confined them in his cave. Indra is a swashbuckler, ever ready for the fray, and also it must be said with a strong taste for Soma, of which he drinks enormous quantities. Some of the hymns in which this feature is dwelt on with great gusto are thought by some scholars to be satirical and to belong to the period when the gods were being taken less seriously. But one sees that in his period of vigour this trait in his character did not tend to make Indra less popular. There are hymns addressed to Indra and Varuna jointly, and in these the sympathies of the poets evidently incline not to the god of lofty and undimmed purity and holiness, but rather to the vigorous champion who has done so many great acts and whose tastes bring him somewhat nearer to men.

The first of the following extracts from the Rigveda brings Indra before us in a lively way, and part of a hymn to Yama the god of the departed may also find a place here.

Invitation of Indra to the Sacrifice

Hear, Indra, mighty thunderer, hear,
Great regent of the middle sphere;
List, while we sweetly sing thy praise
In new and well-constructed lays,

Hymns deftly framed by poet skilled
As artisans a chariot build.
Come, Indra, come, thou much invoked;
Our potent hymn thy steed has yoked.
Come straight and let no rival priest
Prevail to draw thee from our feast.
All is prepared: the soma draught
Is sweet as thou hast ever quaffed.

To Yama

To great King Yama homage pay
Who was the first of men that died,
That crossed the mighty gulf, and spied
For mortals out the heavenly way.

No power can ever close the road
Which he to us laid open then,
By which in long procession men
Ascend to his sublime abode.

By it our fathers all have passed;
And that same path we too shall trace,
And every new succeeding race,
Of mortal men while time shall last.

The god assembles round his throne,
A growing throng, the good and wise,—
All those whom, scanned with searching eyes,
He recognises as his own.

Thou there once more each well-known face
Shalt see of those thou lovedst here;

Thy parents, wife and children dear,
With rapture shalt thou then embrace.

The fathers, too, shalt thou behold,
The heroes who in battle died,
The saints and sages glorified,
The pious bounteous kings of old.

The gods whom here in humble wise
Thou worshippedst with doubt and awe,
Shall there the impervious veil withdraw
Which hid their glory from thine eyes.

It is clear that such gods as these could have no lasting reign over the human mind, and that though their service was kept up and infinite pains bestowed on it by priest, thinker and poet, their figures were doomed to fade as the civilisation of the people increased. And so we find on the one hand that scepticism assailed these gods even while hymns were being composed in their honour, and on the other that a new race of gods appeared, gods who had no history or legend, but were formed out of some notion or quality, and were capable, since they were created for that very object, of receiving the more refined devotion which Soma and Indra were scarcely fitted to delight in. In a hymn to Indra we find these statements:—

"Thy friend is never slain; his might
Is never worsted in the fight. . . .

> But thou chastisest all the proud
> The niggard and the faithless crowd
> Who thine existence doubt, and cry
> In scorn, 'No Indra rules on high.' . . .
> When clouds collect and thunders roar,
> The scoffers tremble and adore,"

who had formerly indulged in their scoffing unchecked. We see that, as has happened in other lands, the god of the national worship did not have everything his own way. There were some who doubted his existence, some who turned his supposed habits and tastes into ridicule. Religious doubt was to have a great career in India, all its phenomena were to appear which are familiar to us also, of sharp criticism of the priesthood, the assertion of morality and inner piety as being superior to ritual, and then of estrangement from the public service of religion and denial both of the gods and of the future. This was no doubt inevitable in any case; and we can the less wonder at it when we consider what manner of beings India possessed in the national gods.

A new set of gods has here to be spoken of, who possess the characteristic that they are the offspring not of history but of reflection. India is prolific of new gods, and when the old national gods were paling it was not surprising that a new kind of deity appeared, more satisfying to the demands of thought than the old kind, but on the other hand, as might be expected from their extraction, somewhat wanting in

vigour and character. Of these, we may speak first of the Being called by Professor M. Müller

"The Unknown God."

"In the beginning there arose the Golden Child; as soon as born, he alone was lord of all that is. He established the earth and the heaven; who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

He who gives breath, he who gives strength, whose command all the bright gods revere, whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death; who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

He to whom heaven and earth standing firm by his will, look up, trembling in their mind; he over whom the risen sun shines forth; who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

May he not hurt us, he who is the begetter of the earth, or he, the righteous who begat the heaven, he who also begat the bright and mighty waters; who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?

Pragapati, no other than thou embraces all these created things. May that be ours which we desire when sacrificing to thee, may we be lords of wealth!" (S.B.E. xxxii. 1).

In this hymn, which is to be dated about 1000 B.C., the poet, seeking a Supreme being in whom all the creation and all the gods are embraced, finds Pragapati, or the Lord of Created things, who accordingly is not a divinity known of old and revered for his mighty works and for his character, but one framed to supply

a need of the human mind. His name is a description rather than a real name. The same applies, though with a difference, to another of the new gods of this period, Brahmanaspati, Lord of Prayer. In the exaltation of the ritual, prayer was coming to be regarded as a cosmic force, on which, as on the sunshine and the rain, the order of nature and the recurrence of the seasons depended. It was fitting, therefore, that prayer should have its divine embodiment, as fire had Agni, and the sun Pushan. This deity became more and more important; everything was thought to come from him, one prayed to the great Prayer, by whom so many things, indeed all things were wrought. This is evidently not early and natural, but late and reflected religion. Brahmanaspati, like Pragapati, who, however, occurs much less frequently, is an artificial deity, one made by human thought. The same is to be said of Visvakarman, Maker of all, who produces all things by sacrificing himself, and thus represents both creation and sacrifice, both power and devotion. As an attempt to combine all the gods in one notion, we may mention the figure Visvadevas, all the gods, which occurs in many of the hymns, and may also remember how, when a particular god is receiving praise, he is said to be another god or other gods. Agni is said to be nearly every god, and the same is done with others. These phenomena may lie far apart from each other in space and in time, but they all belong to the period before the collections of the hymns were

closed, that is probably before 1000 B.C. They all alike bear eloquent testimony that the polytheism of the Vedic gods was felt to be confusing and unbearable, and that while some took to scepticism, many an earnest attempt was made to escape from the confusion without giving up faith in the gods. These intellectual movements did not however interfere with the great ordinance of sacrifice. The priests went on building up and elaborating and exalting the rite at which they presided, and their hymns remained in use, though many a change took place in the views that were held about the nature of the gods.

Ancient India presents on a scale unparalleled elsewhere the spectacle of a sacrificial ritual which continues by its own momentum when the ideas which at first inspired it are forgotten or altogether changed. We stand here at the point where the old religion of the hymns passes into the later system of Brahmanism, or rather is found to have undergone this transformation; for of the process by which the change took place there is no record. When we find ourselves transported to the Brahmanic system we observe that a number of things have been altered in Indian religion, in fact that everything is changed.

II

Brahmanism

With the later books of Indian religion, even those whose age and authority caused them to be thought inspired, we enter as it were on a quite different country. The Vedic hymns, taking them generally, give us the impressions of the mountains and the clouds, of the dawn and of the sunshine; they belong to an age not yet feeling any weariness. It is true that the gift of producing such hymns is attached in the old period to certain families, yet the hymn is there not a matter of form but a real force, it does really influence and support the gods and secure for man solid blessings at their hands. The priestly system is not yet fixed beyond possibility of change; the arrangements of worship are to a large extent primitive and elastic. The men who offer these sacrifices believe in the gods and believe also in themselves. They are an active and spirited race; it is their part to fight against enemies, to increase their herds, to till the ground, and to offer sacrifice, and the gods assist them to gain the objects of their lives.

The later age of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads is one of a fully formed priestly class, the representatives of which stand at the head of society and enjoy the odour of hereditary sanctity. The sacrifices are formed into an immense and most elaborate system, surrounded with mystery which only experts can explain. The hymns are now regarded as not of human but divine origin, but only the priests can say what they mean, or use them with effect. On the other side, however, this age has seen the rise of religious speculation and discussion, which, like the philosophy of Spinoza, while very religious in tone, arrives at conclusions subversive of the traditional beliefs. The hymns and sacrifices, the gods, the world and all its parts, and man himself are subjected to a searching scrutiny, in order to discover what is real and substantial in each of them, and what is the ultimate reality. Along with this there is a new view of human life and destiny. Life is regarded not as formerly, as full of solid satisfactions, but as a sad captivity from which it is desirable to be set free. And in respect of conduct the standard set up is the ascetic one. Renunciation and escape from all desire are looked upon as good, not because of any benefit secured by them for others or the world, but for their own sake, or because they hasten the escape, to which one must look forward, from the burden of existence.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the difference in every important respect between the Vedic and

what is usually styled the Brahmanic period. Can we trace the historical connection between them and show how the free high-spirited warriors of the Aryan immigration turned into the venerators of the priesthood and the brooding ascetics of the later books? It is difficult to do so. There is no continuous stream of literature from the one period to the other. As with early Christian literature, so here, we pass from the books concerned with the origins to the books showing the later system, across a wide gap which there are no books to help us to bridge. India, it is well known, has no historical annals, nor has it any clear succession of great men to represent its various periods and advances. The historian seeking to explain how one period passed into another has to be content with saying "It must have been" so-and-so, he cannot say positively "thus it was." At the same time the question before us admits of an answer which has a high degree of probability. There is the undoubted fact to proceed upon that the Hindus of the Brahmanic period live in a different part of India from the Aryans of the Vedas. The conquering tribes when they first entered India dwelt in the high-lying valleys of the Punjaub, where the climate is temperate and bracing. But before the Brahmanic period the tribes had moved eastward to the plains of the Ganges, where the climate is tropical. This change may itself account for much. It is true that religion, like other living things has its inevitable changes, and that the gods of the Vedas like those of Greece were necessarily

doomed to pale when philosophical reflection arose in the minds of their worshippers. But this does not explain why Indian thought was so subjective and so sad. Again, it is said that when the Aryans moved forward to the Ganges they were more brought together than before, and realised more clearly their own nationality. Among a subject population against whom they had to be on their guard they learned to value more highly their own institutions. And this, no doubt, afforded an opportunity to the priestly class to organise their system more thoroughly and to assume authority to impose it on their people and keep the superstitions of the savage races at arm's length. The subjection of the people to Brahman rule would account for much but not for all of the change which here took place. The whole people underwent a change, and this is noticeable even among those who were least under the influence of the priesthood and criticised it most freely. Judged by the works, which no doubt represent the thoughts of the best minds among them when the new settlements had been in existence for some centuries, the people of India did not feel at home in the world they lived in; they had grown weary of the earth and all its successes and pleasures and had learned to turn their thoughts to a world of the mind, above the seen and temporal.

The priestly organisation of the Brahmanic period first claims attention. The class of Brahmans or priests rose to pre-eminence after a struggle with the class of warriors (Kshatriyas) of which little beyond its

result is known. The caste system, not found in the hymns, appears fully formed in the later books. The Brahmans are sacred by birth; the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas (farmers) come after them, but are allowed to be present at the sacrifice. The Sudras, whether or not the previous owners of the land, now reduced to serfdom, are excluded from it. The power of the Brahmans is derived from the rite of sacrifice, which only they can carry on effectively. The sacrifice was an ancient rite, and had in time become a very elaborate and complicated one, and many of its features, as has happened in other cases also, were not readily explained, their origin being now lost in darkness. The Brahmans however were at hand to clear up everything; they became therefore the stewards of mysteries to which none but they had the key. Now the result of such an arrangement has always been that, in the hands of those who were the professional interpreters of its mysteries, religion grew more mysterious still. So it proved in this case. The hymns, composed originally by poets who knew quite well what they were doing, and who would set to work deliberately to compose a new hymn for a special sacrifice, came to be considered inspired. Every word of them had been dictated from above; they were "sruti" heard; the poet had not conceived but received them. And as much of the hymns had with the lapse of time grown obscure, there was room for an interpreter of them, and this office the Brahmans sought to fill. That meanings of which the writer could never have dreamed

were put upon the words is no unexampled circumstance. But the whole rite of sacrifice was similarly full of difficulties; at every point there was a right way to proceed, rigidly fixed by custom and on no account to be departed from. This required explanation and minute description; and the books called Brahmanas are just the collections of the instructions of the Brahmans on points of ritual, and explanations of the ritual and of the hymns. As has also happened in other cases the explanations came in time to share the sacred character of the text; the Brahmanas also counted as "sruti." As they now exist these books are the outcome of centuries of what we should call theological discussion. "They contain," Prof. Eggeling says (Satap. Brahm. S.B.E., vol. xii., p. xx.) "the accumulated wisdom and speculations of generations of Indian divines. They are digests of a floating mass of single discourses or dicta on various points of the ceremonial of worship, ascribed to individual teachers and handed down orally in the theological schools. Single discourses of this kind were called "brahmana"—probably either because they were intended for the instruction and guidance of priests (brahman) generally, or because they were for the most part the authoritative utterances of such as were thoroughly versed in Vedic and sacrificial lore, and competent to act as Brahmans or superintending priests. In later times a collection or digest of such detached pieces came to be likewise called a Brahmana."

These works can scarcely be regarded as literature;

no one would choose to read them for their own qualities. The translators use strong terms in speaking of their puerilities, their forced and unnatural interpretations of the simplest matters, the general dreariness they spread over such an amazing extent of matter. They travel over and over the immense detail of ceremonial, dwelling on each word, each act, each gesture, as a matter of infinite importance and surrounding everything with an air of the most recondite mystery. They thus furnish a commentary on the hymns and sacrificial formulæ, in which however there is a complete absence of historical feeling. We look in vain for information as to the original intention of the words used in the service; we are supplied instead with an abundance of legendary tradition about the acts and relations of the gods, and with etymologies of the terms which the scientific linguist sees at once to be impossible and absurd. On which side of the altar the priest is to stand when a certain act is done, with what gesture he is to use the sacrificial spoons and wooden swords, in which of the sacrificial fires he is to burn each part of the victim, with what intonation he is to pronounce a certain word, all this is told, and a reason given for each instruction, drawn from the story of the gods or from the hidden meaning of the elements of nature. What is the reason why a hymn contains so many verses and a verse so many syllables, neither more nor less, this also we are told, until we are stupefied with wonder how these men ever came to think they knew

so much about every jot and tittle of a transaction, the original meaning of which was evidently quite unknown to them. The Brahmanas are interesting for their legends, of which they are the principal repository, and they bring actually before us what the sacrificial system came in their hands to be, on which the priests expended such enormous labour, and with which their whole power and influence was bound up. For a comprehension of sacrifice in ancient times among men of Aryan race these books are an invaluable treasure-house, though one to be used with caution. To the student of religion generally they furnish evidence of the greatest example the world has ever seen of what is rightly termed ritualism, *i.e.* dwelling on rites for their own sake, and not for the sake of any moral and religious life conveyed by them. When religious ceremonies are kept up, and punctiliously repeated, elaborated, defined, commented on, and made always more important and mysterious, although they have ceased to lift up the worshipper to living sympathy with God and brotherhood to men, then their value becomes doubtful. Rites there must always be in the religion of society; the power of religion on the generality of men is bound up with them, the self-respect of the worshipping community requires them, the dignity of states calls for them, no less than does the sacredness of religion itself. But to keep up rites which the people do not understand, to which no thinking person any longer looks for spiritual and moral furtherance, simply because they are

statutory, and to find in the details of them an ever-growing wealth of mystery, this is a weakness to which religion has often showed itself prone, and from which its true friends ought by all means to defend it.

When we turn from the Brahmanas to the Upanishads (sessions or lectures) we find ourselves in a very different mental climate. In fact when we begin to realise what kind of thoughts are here before us, we are filled with wonder that these books should be reckoned among the sacred writings of Brahmanism at all. What we find here is not dogmatics as in the Brahmanas, but speculation. What God is and how the gods are related to the one God, what the world is, what man is in his essence, what is his destiny and how he may fulfil it, these are the questions here taken up and followed through many a metaphor and image, and with many a repetition, often wearisome enough. And the answers found to such problems in these books are not at all orthodox. The rites of the official system are not spoken of as means of grace by which the faithful may work out his salvation. The enquirer is not directed to any of the many gods, as if such a being could save him, he is not directed to the Vedas or to the sacrifice or to the priest. There is a method set forth in the Upanishads by which the highest end of life can be attained, but it is not the method of conformity to traditional beliefs and usages. It may be said to be subversive of these and to call man away from them to a position in which he is entirely independent of them. The

pursuit of truth for its own sake is what we here find, the incessant determined questioning of all beings and all things till they yield up to the enquirer their inmost secret. And what follows practically on this determined search for truth is the attempt, deliberate and sustained, to unite oneself once and for all, whatever sacrifice it may imply, with the supreme reality thus found. The peculiar blending in these works of religion with speculation makes them intensely interesting to more classes of mind than one. From them has come an impulse to the modern philosophy of Europe, the result of which will not quickly be exhausted; Schopenhauer took great delight in them and the germs of the doctrine he taught may be seen in them by the discerning reader. The ideas they contain and the system of life to which they point were fully developed in Buddhism, to which they are on one side the best introduction. But even apart from this the pattern of saintliness which they set forth deserves to be taken into account by all who seek to know the higher workings of human devotion.

But how is it, we have to ask, that these books which are occupied with so different a type of religion from that of the Brahmans, yet form a part of the sacred writings of India for which the Brahmans were responsible? How have they come to be handed down along with the hymns and the treatises on sacrifice as writings which partake of the higher degree of sanctity? This phenomenon engages Mr Max Müller's attention in chap. vii. of his Hibbert Lectures, and he accounts

for it by crediting the priestly class with the deliberate policy of claiming for the religion they administered work done not at all under their inspiration and even as they must have known of quite a different spirit from their own, because they saw that it had life in it and was destined to continue. Mr Hardy in his "Religion des Alten Indiens" (Münster, 1893) accounts for the phenomenon in the same way. He points out that the speaker in many of the discussions in the Upanishads are not Brahmans but members of the secular ruling class, while in some cases women also are said to have taken part in them. From this it would appear that the speculations embodied in these books did not originate with the priestly class, as indeed they are not likely to have done, but among the laity. The Brahmans, however, were the literary men of India; and it was necessarily by their intervention that these discussions, after being repeated from mouth to mouth perhaps for centuries and thus brought into a smooth and popular form, were at last collected in books and invested with authority as sacred. That many of the Brahmans themselves may have sympathised with such ways of thinking is not at all improbable. We sometimes find the priest officiating at the sacrifice directed to regard what he is doing in the light of such speculation, as if the priest saying mass were instructed to be thinking at the same time of the Hegelian doctrine of the trinity. And we shall see in the sequel that the tone of sentiment in the Upanishads was connected with ascetic views and

institutions which the Brahmans must have regarded with favour as a means of upholding their own power.

The Upanishads, of which the number is estimated variously by different scholars, Professor Max Müller counting 148 of them, and others considerably more, belong to different dates and differ from each other in character. Any attempt to state the general purport of this class of books will be more true of some of them than of others. In some the discussions turn mainly round some particular sacrifice. The books have the name of *aranyakas* or forest books; they represent the meditations of ascetics who had retired from the world to the forest and devoted the remainder of their days to religious absorption. Even such persons we see did not withdraw their interest from sacrifice. The true view to be taken of the acts done by the priest, the hidden meaning to be recognised in each element of the rite, the relation of the sacrifice to the great cosmic processes of nature and to the corresponding processes of the human mind, all this forms the subject of the meditations of many of those forest dwellers, as preserved in the Upanishads. The view put forward about the sacrifice and its various elements is generally forced and unnatural enough; it would be difficult, Professor Max Müller says, to surpass the absurdity of the explanations here given. But while outward rites are thus treated with respect, the interest of the discussions lies elsewhere. Sometimes a deeper, mystical view of

the sacrifice is stated, and sometimes again there is a pronounced critical attitude towards the sacrifice, and indeed every part of external religion; we hear the voice of the rationalist or of the meditative devotee to whom all external religious forms are indifferent, and a higher truth has been revealed, which has been hidden till now from the ordinary faithful, and in some cases is regarded as being properly esoteric and not to be communicated to the common people. Here we touch on the view of religious truth as knowledge which is so marked a feature of these speculations and of which we must presently say something more. As truly as the Greeks, do those Indians regard the possession of true knowledge as the all-important thing, which makes all the difference for a man and decides whether he is in the right or not. A man must put everything aside to gain this knowledge.

The doctrine of the Upanishads apart from the solemn mystifications about sacrifice and all its features, that doctrine out of which Buddhism proceeded and which has powerfully influenced modern philosophy, is on the whole not difficult to understand. Its articles are not numerous nor diverse; everywhere we find the same great thoughts dwelt upon and enforced in connection with carefully chosen figures and with manifold deliberate iteration. The problem dealt with is that of the ultimate essence and the all-pervading principle of the universe, and the teaching had perhaps primarily been rationalistic, as it implies a denial of the independent existence or real personal

power of the different gods, and reduces them all to expressions or sides of the one ultimate being. The denial of the gods with which every one is struck in Buddhism is prepared for in the Upanishads, where each of the gods in turn is spoken of in the same way as a manifestation of the one supreme, and expressions also occur which warn against putting any trust in the separate gods and so being led away from the one and only source of eternal satisfaction.

If we ask as to the nature and person of the being who thus to the seeker of the highest things takes the place of all the gods, we touch on the question of early Indian metaphysics, and only a mere indication of the answer can here be given. The Being who is one, and is the source and upholder of all things is not to be compared to any other being; he is not one of a class and cannot be identified with any particular thing or any single deity. Sometimes it is Brahma who is spoken of under the language applied to the first principle; sometimes it is Indra or another god, but this is exceptional. The language is generally kept for a being who has no proper name at all, who is not a god with a history and local associations but can only be described by comparing him to this or that activity in nature, can only be named by ambiguous quasi-philosophical phrases. Not by any rites or prayers or penances can this being be approached; yet he is most approachable, when once the way to him is known. He is that which is, that which has being, the substance (Sat), and is present

everywhere, in everything, not seen nor touched as if apart from other things by itself, yet real, the most real of all, that which is real in everything while all the other parts and qualities of which the thing is made up are fleeting and illusory. As the whole sea is salt wherever one may taste it, so the whole of things is pervaded by this unseen yet most real being. The term by which it is most frequently spoken of is *Atman*. This is a word of many meanings, and the proper translation of it in the Upanishads has been much debated. Some scholars have rendered it soul or spirit, or mind, but the rendering *self*, adopted by Prof. Max Müller seems to answer best the requirements of the case. There is an atman in man and an atman in the universe, and the atman in the universe bears the same relation to the universe as does the atman in man to the human person. It is diffused over all, there is nothing that is not related to it, it is in all beings and is active and conscious in them all. Each part and aspect of the world exhibits some side of it; in the sun it is present in one aspect, in the storm in another. But while present in all the manifold movement of the world and aware of all its varieties and its incessant changes, it is itself undistracted and unchanging, and dwells in an even and eternal calm and rest. It moves and lives and shines, and is at peace in the sunshine and the dark; in growth and in the cessation of growth. One favourite figure in which its action is spoken of, a figure indeed which is more than a figure and gives rise to important

practical consequences in the relations between the great atman and man, is that of respiration. The life of the atman in the universe goes on after the manner of breathing. There is exhalation, out-breathing, which is expression, and holding of the breath which is enforced quietude, and inhalation, down-breathing, in which out-breathing is suspended but another out-breathing or period of expression is prepared for. Such is the great atman in which all things live and move and have their being. The atman in man is like it.

To take a step further. This atman, at first perhaps a philosophical speculation in which the Indian mind sought to rise above the contradictory claims of rival gods, and to understand the world not as the play-ground of conflicting worships but as a whole majestic unity in which the mind could rest, this atman is not only an object of knowledge but an object of devotion. He is to be adored as the gods are but with a worthier and deeper adoration, not in stately acts of homage but in the efforts of personal piety seeking to appropriate him and to grow one with him. In the first place certainly the atman has to be sought in the way of knowledge. How is this secret to be known, the question presents itself in one story after another in the Upanishads, how is this knowledge to be gained, which is the most precious of all? And the answer is generally that such and such a person is in possession of it, and is able to teach it; the earnest seeker goes to him and sits at his feet and

serves him for many years, to gain what he desires. The knowledge is often spoken of as esoteric, not to be communicated to every one, but only to those of a certain caste who seek it, or to those who show aptitude for it. The ordinary studies pursued in the country, the study of the Vedas and of the various sciences cultivated in India were of no avail with a view to this more special treasure; it was a thing apart. Not that the seeker for this higher knowledge was dispensed from the study of the Vedas and of Indian science generally; he was under the same obligation as others to discharge every ordinary duty imposed on him by the usage of his caste. But he had found something to add to these, and as his studies were suffused with this higher aim it often appeared to him that the other subjects of study were of no value at all compared with this one. It is thus that we must understand the passages in the Upanishads where the study of the Vedas is disparaged as well as every other part of the working religion of India.

A few texts of the Upanishads may now be fitly presented to the reader. He will do well not to hurry past them but to turn them over in his mind, trying to realise the attitude of spirit of which they are the outcome.

"The lower knowledge is the Rig-veda, Yagur-veda, Sâma-veda, Atharva-veda, Liksha (phonetics), Kalpa (ceremonial), Vyâkarana (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Khandas (metre), Gyotisha (astronomy); but the higher knowledge is that by which the Indestructible (Brahman) is apprehended."

"That which cannot be seen, nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the omnipresent, infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which the wise regard as the source of all beings" (Mund. Up.).

"Considering sacrifice and good works as the best, these fools know no higher good, and having enjoyed (their reward) on the height of heaven, gained by good works, they enter again this world or a lower one."

"But those who practise penance and faith in the forest, tranquil, wise and living on alms, depart free from passion through the sun to where that immortal Person dwells whose nature is imperishable" (Mund. Up. i. 2).

"As here on earth whatever has been acquired by exertion perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired for the next world by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth. Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds. But those who depart from hence after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds" (Khand. Up. viii. 2).

"Those who belong to us, whether living or departed, and whatever else there is which we wish for and do not obtain, all that we find there (if we descend into our heart, where Brahman dwells, in the ether of the heart). There are all our true desires,

but hidden by what is false. As people who do not know the country, walk again and again over a gold treasure that has been hidden somewhere in the earth, and do not discover it, thus do all those creatures day after day go into the Brahma-world (they are merged in Brahma while asleep) and yet do not discover it because they are carried away by untruth (do not come to themselves, *i.e.* do not discover the true self in Brahman, dwelling in the heart") (Khand. Up. viii. 3).

"When all desires that dwell in his heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal, and obtains Brahman."

"When all the ties of the heart are severed here on earth, then the mortal becomes immortal—here ends the teaching" (Katha. Up. ii. 6, 17).

"The Self, smaller than small, greater than great, is hidden in the heart of that creature. A man who is free from desires and free from grief, sees the majesty of the Self by the grace of the Creator."

"Though sitting still he walks far; though lying down he goes everywhere."

"The wise who knows the Self as bodiless within the bodies, as unchanging among changing things, as great and omnipresent, does never grieve."

"That Self cannot be gained by the Veda nor by understanding nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. The Self chooses him (his body) as his own."

"But he who has not first turned away from his

wickedness, who is not tranquil and subdued, or whose mind is not at rest, he can never obtain the Self even by knowledge" (Katha. Up. i. 2, 25).

"All this is Brahman. Let a man meditate on that visible world as beginning ending and breathing in it (the Brahman)."

"Now man is a creature of will. According to what his will is in this world, so will he be when he has departed this life. Let him therefore have this will and belief;

"The intelligent whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (omnipresent and invisible) from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks and is never surprised,

"He is my Self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed, or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.

"He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who never speaks and who is never surprised, he, my Self within the heart, is that Brahman (neuter). When I shall have departed from hence I shall obtain him (that Self)" (Khand. Up. iii. 14).

"He (the knower of the Self) knows that highest

home of Brahman, in which all is contained, and shines brightly. The wise who, without desiring happiness, worship that Person, transcend this seed (are not born again)."

"He who forms desires in his mind is born again through his desires, here and there. But to him whose desires are fulfilled, and who is conscious of the true Self (within himself) all desires vanish, even here on earth."

"That Self cannot be gained by the Veda nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained" (Mund. Up. 2).

But the knowledge of the Atman, it will be seen from these passages, had not only to be attained by attending a teacher, it had to be practised, and the entire appropriation and possession of it depended ultimately on practice, sustained, resolute, continued, and lasting while life itself endured. And this practice of the knowledge of the Atman was a very peculiar thing. What was required was to realise one's identity with the Self in the universe not only intellectually, but practically. It was to be done by an effort of will, drawing away one's thoughts and desires and imaginations from all things outward, resisting all solicitations of worldly advantage or pleasure, and concentrating one's whole mind and thought on nothing but the great Self. Certain methods were prescribed in addition to the renunciation of all outward possessions and ties, and the

general direction to direct one's mind steadily towards the Self, by which the desired absorption and identification with the great Self could be brought about. A certain method of breathing is spoken of, in practising which slowly and deliberately one repeats and carries on in one's own person the cosmic breathing in which the great Self is always engaged.

One more point is suggested in these extracts. In the Upanishads we meet with a view of man's future destiny which is quite different from that of the Vedas. In the hymns the believer when he dies goes to Yama, or to the moon, and there meets with his fathers and is happy in the society of the gods who minister to his wants and free him from all care. In the Upanishads no such prospect as this is thought of; nay more, instead of desiring to continue at all after his body is dissolved, the believer desires not to live or to be conscious any more. The sad and mournful view of life which has come in place of the old joy of living finds its chief expression in this that life itself is regarded as an evil, and final and entire escape from living as the highest good. Add to this that the belief in metempsychosis has entered India since the Vedic period and has been accepted by the people as undoubtedly true. No one apparently thought of denying that the soul passes at the death of the body it inhabited into another body and then into another and another. It was in this way it was thought that a man reaped the reward or the penalty of his good

or evil deeds in this life. If he had lived ill he lived again in a lower form than that in which he had sinned, he would pass into an animal, or a person of lower rank, and it would take him more such lives to get to the end of the existences ordained for him. If he lived well, he rose in the scale at his next birth and came nearer to the end. The best of all would be when he had passed through all the lives appointed for him, and could die his last death from which he would not need to be born into the world any more. This doctrine of re-birth or transmigration is often thought to be characteristic of Buddhism in which it is certainly prominent, but no one can read the Upanishads without seeing that it had taken possession of the mind of India before the new religion appeared.

A part of Brahmanism, however, which Buddhism did not adopt was the system of *asramas* or exercises by which the great ends of identification with the Self of the universe, and of final cessation from existence were sought after. To every well-born Indian, Brahmanism offered a career which embraced the whole of life and led at last, if resolutely followed, to the desired end. It did not, like Christian monasticism, withdraw the votary entirely from the world, but provided that, at one period of his life, the duties which every man owed to society and to the various gods, should be discharged. This period of life, however, during which a man lived in his home with his family, was placed between two periods of withdrawal in such

a way as to appear a mere temporary and exceptional change of his career.

This is set forth in detail in the laws of *Manu* and other codes which belong to a later period, but the principles of it are all present in the Upanishads, and even the gods are there represented as acquiring the true knowledge in this way. The first stage lasted twelve years and began in the case of a Brahman at the age of seven, in the case of a Kshatriya at ten, and in that of a Vaisya at eleven. During these twelve years the youth is a student, lives with his teacher and obeys and serves him, and studies one of the Samhitas (collections) of the Vedas. The studentship is over when the master says to the student, "From henceforth attend to other duties." This means that he is to return to the world, in the character of a snataka, one who has bathed (in the Veda, also by a symbolic washing), to light the fire of a household with a bride, rear a family, and offer the five daily sacrifices, viz., an offering to Brahman, consisting of the recitation or teaching of the Veda, the sacrifice (vegetarian) to the departed, the burnt sacrifice to the gods, the sacrifice to living beings in need of help, and the sacrifice of hospitality. After a time he might leave his family and go to live in the forest, where he spent his time in meditation and austerities, as the following story shows :—

A king, named Br——, having established his son in his sovereignty, went into the forest, because he considered this body as transient, and had obtained

freedom from all desire. Having performed the highest penance, he stands there with uplifted arms, looking up to the sun. At the end of a thousand days, the Saint Sakayanya, who knew the Self, came near, burning with splendour, like a fire without smoke. He said to the king, "Rise, rise! choose a boon!"

The king bowing before him said, "O Saint, I know not the Self, thou knowest the essence. We have heard so. Teach it us."

Sakayanya replied, "What thou askest is difficult to obtain. Choose other pleasures."

The king then enters on a recital of the weaknesses and miseries of the body, and on the decaying and dying state of all human things, and not only of these but of spiritual beings too, of the tribes of animals and of the elements of nature. He goes on: "In such a world as this what is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures if he who has fed on them is seen to return to this world again, and again! Deign therefore to take me out! In this world I am like a frog in a dry well! O Saint, thou art my way, thou art my way!"

The fourth stage, which it stood open to the forest-dweller to enter, was that of entire surrender of everything, even of the most moderate diet and of the companionship of his wife, if she had gone with him to the forest. He now took up the wandering mendicant life of the *sannyasin* or *bhikshu*. Quite done with the world, attached to no pleasure, no comfort, no person, no place, no occupation, the old man wandered about

the world begging his bread and looking for nothing but death, though even on death he was not to set his heart. All he could now wish for was that he might be fully united with the Self; and that when the lamp of his life went out it might never be lighted again.

III

Buddhism

Two great stages of the growth of religion have passed before us in our short sketch of Indian faith; we now come to a third. In Vedism we saw a great Nature worship. Men sought to enter into fellowship with the beings, made in their own likeness, whom they apprehended in the sun, the moon, the heaven, the storm. In Brahmanism we saw beside the official worship of these beings the rise of reflection on things human and divine. The spirit sought in itself what it was ceasing to find in the old objects of worship, and began to comfort itself with speculation and asceticism. These stages of religion have occurred elsewhere than in India; they appear, first one and then the other, in the normal development of thought which everywhere accompanies the growth of civilisation. Of the third stage which we now approach in Indian religion this cannot be said. But few cases have occurred of the appearance of a sacred person whose religious experience and attainments are felt to sum up in a perfect and typical way what the faith

of their brethren is striving to attain, and who thus becomes to them a leader in the upward path, and a living summary of their belief and aspiration. Only three great religions have rendered to mankind this service. Of these the Christian faith has done so most completely. In Christ the Christian finds the Way, the Truth, the Life he needs. But the Prophet Mohammed also stands in this position for his followers; and so in India stood for centuries and still stands, not now in India, but in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam, and northwards in Tibet and China, Gautama, the Buddha.

Before proceeding to notice the life and teachings of the founder, it may be convenient to say a few words on the source of our information about him and on the historical character of the story. There are various sets of books about the life and teaching of the Buddha, some belonging to Northern, some to Southern Buddhism, and these differ greatly from each other. The books of the Southern branch of the religion are recognised by scholars as more historical than the others; they are written in Pali, the language of Buddhism in Ceylon.[1] While no book can be shown to date higher than the year 300 B.C., a century and

[1] The Pali Scriptures contain a literature about twice as large as the Bible of Europe; if its repetitions were removed it would be somewhat smaller than our Bible. It consists of three Pitakas, baskets or collections. The first is the Vinaya Pitaka, dealing with discipline, but including the Mahavagga, a history of the founding of the order. The second is the Sutta Pitaka, or collection of teachings.

a half or more after the death of the founder, the tradition contained in some of them is older; so that we know what was current as to the Buddha's life and teaching a century after his death, or even less.

Can the information thus supplied to us as to the life of the founder be regarded as trustworthy and historical? There is no doubt that the history is surrounded with a rich growth of legend. It is also beyond doubt that the later the narratives are the more fantastic are they; the books of the Northern Buddhists, *e.g.* are much more luxuriant in imagination than those of Ceylon. Are the earliest books of all to be relied on? Not altogether; much in them is evidently the outcome of the later circumstances of the community; much shows the process of enriching the narrative to be already at work. Some scholars have held that the whole story is legendary, and that no solid basis of fact is to be recognised in it, but only a sun myth with later accretions from the experience of the Buddhist Church. This view has not of late been put forward in Britain, and the certainty has now been arrived at by several lines of study that the features of a real human life are recognisable.[1]

It contains the earliest account of the later life of the founder, books of meditation and devotion, sayings by the Master, poems, fairy tales and fables, stories about Buddhist saints, and so on. The third collection, the Abidhamma, contains speculations and discussions on various subjects.

[1] Some remarkable archæological discoveries in particular of which an account is given by Mr Rhys Davids

Few pretend to say much more; a clear separation of the historical from the legendary elements of the story is not yet attainable. It has to be mentioned here that many incidents in the life of Gautama bear a striking resemblance to similar incidents in the Christian tradition. These Buddhism cannot have borrowed from Christianity; but the other alternative, that Christianity borrowed them by channels scarcely now traceable from Buddhism, has been defended with much learning by some German scholars. It is not necessary to do more than mention it.

The founder of Buddhism was born about the year 550 B.C. at Kapilavastu, about 100 miles north-west of

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in *The Century Magazine*, April 1902, place it beyond doubt that the Buddha really existed, and that pious offices were paid to his ashes after his cremation by the members of his own clan as well as by others. Inscriptions brought to light in the year 1898 show that the Sakya clan, of which the Buddha was a member, dwelt at the time of his death in what is now a frontier district of Nepal. Three years before that event they were driven from their old capital Kapilavastu; but they formed a new one some fifteen miles further south, just beyond the present frontier of Nepal, and there they erected a *stupa* or massive stone cairn to guard the portion of the ashes of the Buddha which was committed to their keeping. The discovery of this stupa with its inscription may be followed by others which will throw further light on the historical circumstances of the life of the great man.

Benares. His father was the king or chief of the tribe of Sakyas, and ruled over one of the small principalities with which the valley of the Ganges was then studded. The founder's personal name was Gautama; other designations which are applied to him are titles rather than names. Thus, Siddartha means "he who has accomplished his aim"; Sakya-muni is "the wise man of the Sakyas," and other such terms might be mentioned. The title Buddha or "Enlightened One" was acquired by Gautama, as we shall see, when he attained the crisis of his career and his enlightenment took place.

At this point we shall do well to try to realise the state of thought and of religion in India when Gautama grew up. What we saw in last chapter has partly prepared us for what we shall find here; but we also meet with some new phenomena. We have to think of the official religion still going on, as it had always done; the sacrifices were diligently offered, speculation was carried on about them in various quarters, but had no effect on the pomp of celebration by the priests of various classes. The Vedas were diligently repeated and formed the material of all education. Outside these established observances there was the effort on the part of many concerned about their religious advancement, to find peace in the way of thought and moral effort. The houseless state was generally recognised as that which a man must choose who was in earnest about his soul. To treat the body and the affections with contempt,

to throw oneself upon the world for daily bread, to spend one's days and nights in seeking to be free from all desires and to get light by prolonged and intense thought, this was the highest life in India at that time. The problem however with which thought was engaged had changed from that of the Upanishads. What was now asked was not how one was to become identified with the great Self, but how one might escape from suffering. The temper of mind had become even more sad and subjective than before; what earnest men discussed with each other was not the nature of the gods or even of the great Self which in the Upanishads was taking their place, for there was no longer any belief in effective help from any unseen being however he might be called. The conviction, on the other hand, that human life was essentially suffering and nothing but suffering had grown stronger and more oppressive. With the fading away of the gods had come heavy despair of the lot of man upon the earth. Suffering was regarded as the universal and inevitable burden all men were born to carry; and the burden was not lightened by the prospect implied by the accepted doctrine of metempsychosis, that after a man's present life was over he would be born again and yet again, in a succession of lives and rebirths which no one could calculate. The only true good was to escape altogether from conscious existence to forgetfulness. With this dark problem of the human lot many were engaged. Great numbers of persons had taken up the houseless state and thrown

themselves on public charity. The public recognised an obligation to sustain these ascetics and thinkers, and provided stores of food for them in accessible spots. Teachers went about the country and preached in public places on the outskirts of towns. Some teachers had a following of pupils, and might be regarded as leaders of definite sects; some ascetics went about looking for a teacher to whom they should attach themselves if he seemed likely to help them. The greatest reverence of all was paid to the aged beggar or sannyasin who had given up asking anything from the world or from life, and wandered about like the Lama in "Kim" waiting for his release. To the stately official religion and the pathetic efforts of devotees, the reader of that noble book will readily add in his picture of Indian religion the great mass of superstitious beliefs and practices which existed in the time of Gautama, as it does still among the people, and were recognised even by priests and ascetics as part of the working religion of the country. Of such matters the Atharva-Veda presents great store.

Proceeding now to speak of what may be recognised as the historical circumstances of the life of Gautama, we note that his earlier years were spent amidst opulence and luxury at his father's court. He married early and happily, and a bright career seemed open before him. But though he had no sufferings of his own, this did not prevent him as it has not prevented others similarly placed from feeling the full weight of the sufferings of others, and in fact of mankind.

Stories are told[1] of his walking near his house and encountering spectacles of sorrow, mourning and death. These stories may be true, but they are not required to explain his taking the sufferings of others upon his heart and mind. Others with similar rank with his in his own age, are known to have done the same. It was in his twenty-ninth year that he was led to the decisive act, in whatever manner prepared, of abandoning the joys and comforts of home and going out, all ties snapped asunder, into the houseless state, the yellow dress and the almsbowl thenceforward his livery and source of livelihood. This step is often called his "Great Renunciation," but with doubtful propriety since to the Indian standard he rather rose to a higher life by taking this step than descended to a lower. The phrase applies more truly to the determination afterwards attributed to the Buddha in his premundane existence, to leave the state of blessedness in which he existed before and to enter the human lot of suffering. However this may be, Gautama appears from the time of his leaving home in the character of a nobleman seeking salvation, for himself and others. What is the cause of human misery, and what is the cure of it? This now it is all his care to know: all were suffering, he was convinced as others were, from the same malady, a malady for which no cure had yet been found. Yet the discovery might not be far off; we hear of two ascetics parting from each other for

[1] See for these and for a poetical treatment of the life generally, Sir E. Arnold's "*Light of Asia*."

a while with the agreement that when either found out the secret he should tell the other. What means were to be adopted for finding it, there was up to a certain point no doubt. It was by asceticism, every one believed, that one escaped from all the ills of life, and made one's way to the supreme and saving knowledge, by starving the body and avoiding human society. Gautama made trial of this plan. He was an ascetic for six years, and in this way of life he gained some reputation and attracted to himself a small circle of disciples. But he found the plan not to answer, and he had enough strength of mind to give it up, a step which caused his five disciples to leave him. He afterwards gave reasons for holding that the life of the ascetic was one of two extremes to be avoided, and that one bent on attaining the highest things ought not to follow it. From this time forward we see him seeking a better way and engaging for about a year in concentrated mental effort, waiting the hour which he felt sure would come, when he would attain to certainty. At this stage he appears as an intellectual athlete striving after a more satisfactory solution of the problem of the age than any known before. This was the character in which according to the standards of the country, a herald of salvation had then to come forward. When we examine the intellectual system of Buddhism, it is difficult to see that it was so markedly superior to other systems of thought then held in India as to explain at once the attraction of the new doctrine. The success of

Buddhism is doubtless to be attributed to the broad sympathies of the founder and to the practical usefulness of the order he founded as much as to any signal discovery he made in thought. But the view he necessarily took at this stage of the work before him was that the way of salvation was to be found by intense thought. What his Brahman teachers had failed to give him, and what his years of asceticism had not secured he must discover for himself, namely, the truth about the nature and the destiny of suffering man and the means by which one might escape from the universal sorrow.

It was at this time that he underwent his great temptation. The tempter Mara approached him with the suggestion that he was tormenting himself in vain in the efforts he was making, and that he ought not to devote himself to the sorrowful and decaying side of life so exclusively as to miss the enjoyment of the pleasures the world afforded. The temptation was soon over; and not long after came the hour to which he had looked forward, and the discovery to which he had aspired Seated under a Bo-tree, *ficus religiosa* (we afterwards find him as he advances from point to point in the consideration of his new position, seated under trees of other kinds, each no doubt with some significance) he passed from one stage of contemplation to another, till the essence of things was revealed to him. The words in which he celebrates the discovery are memorable.

"Seeking the craftsman of this tabernacle, I have

to run through a course of many births so long as I do not find him; and painful is birth again and again. But now, Maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken; thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the eternal, has attained to the extinction of all desires."

This is the enlightenment, Sambodhi, of Gautama; and from this time forward he is the enlightened one, the Buddha. What is the light that has come to him? We shall see in the sequel some of the elements of his thought; in the meantime we may say that what his eyes opened to see at this crisis of his life was the principle which formed the cornerstone of all his teaching, that all evil and suffering proceed from ignorance, and that the first step towards deliverance from them is clearly to discern their nature and to be freed from ignorance regarding them. This is expressed in terms of the belief in metempsychosis universal in his day. Having come to know the inmost essence of things he has attained redemption, the stream which produced evil and sorrow is for him cut off at its source, and as no more evil is produced neither are there any more of the consequences of evil; the death which will close his present life will be his last death, he will not be born any more. The doctrine is worked out in detail afterwards; at his enlightenment, the Buddha is conscious of the whole of it, and feels the whole of the deliverance and the triumph it brings.

The first book of the Mahavagga, one of the works composing the Vinaya Pitaka, gives a chronicle of the doings of the Buddha from his enlightenment till he had gained a considerable number of followers. In the narrative of the enlightened one's mental experience from the dawning of the light till he began to announce his discovery to others there is a strong savour of the formal and conventional. He sits so many days under a tree of one kind, then so many days under a tree of another kind, each of these withdrawals being occupied with a great question which is solved in words thenceforward memorable and authoritative. On one occasion he ate nothing for twenty-eight days, so full was he of thought; the truth in him was beginning to take shape, and to prepare its further way. It will be regarded as a historical trait that after this period he was visited with doubts whether the knowledge he had gained was to be kept to himself or communicated to the world. The highest figure of the world of spirits, Brahma Sahampati himself appears in order to put an end to these doubts. He said to the blessed one:

"Lord, may the blessed One preach the doctrine! May the perfect One preach the doctrine! There are beings whose mental eyes are darkened by scarcely any dust; but if they do not hear the doctrine, they cannot obtain salvation. These will understand the doctrine.

"Arise, O hero, O victorious one! Wander through

the world, O leader of the pilgrim band, who thyself art free from debt!"

After this the Buddha declares that he is ready to teach those who will receive his doctrine.

"Be open to all who will hear

"The door of the Immortal; let them send forth faith to meet it!"

The world-wide importance of the discovery he has made becomes after this clear to his own mind, till he can speak of it as "a truth glorious in its beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious at the end, to be preached for the welfare of gods and men."

The story now tells of the gathering of a band of disciples to receive the new truth—a matter here as at the inception of every great religious movement, surrounded with deep interest. His two teachers he learns are dead, but his former followers, five in number, are holding together at Benares; he therefore betakes himself to that city. Meeting a member of a religious sect who questions him as to his teacher and his doctrine he replies in verse:

"I have overcome all foes; I am all wise; I am free from stains in every way, I have left everything; and have obtained emancipation by the destruction of desire. I have gained coolness (by the extinction of all passion) and have obtained Nirvana. To found the kingdom of Truth, I go to the city of the Kâsîs (Benares); I will beat the drum of the Immortal in the darkness of this world."

It was at Benares that the wheel of the law was

first set in motion, or as Mr Rhys Davids would have the phrase understood, that the kingdom of righteousness was founded. The five ascetics who had been disciples of Gautama before, readily accepted his doctrine and were received into the community, which, to speak more correctly, was thus formed. It will be convenient to state here what the doctrine was, when thus set before others for their acceptance. The sermon at Benares contains the authentic statement of it, and its essence is set forth in the so-called

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS,

in which the Buddha's discovery of the reason of the suffering in the world and of the way of salvation from it, are set forth. The statement may be quoted:

"This, O Bhikkus, is the Noble Truth of suffering: Birth is suffering: decay is suffering: illness is suffering: death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering. Separation from objects we love is suffering: not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Briefly the five-fold clinging to existence is suffering."

"This, O Bhikkus, is the Noble Truth of the cause of suffering: Thirst, that leads to re-birth, accompanied by pleasure and lust finding its delight here and there. (This thirst is three-fold), namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity."

"This, O Bhikkus, is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering; (it ceases with) the complete cessation of this thirst—a cessation which consists in

the absence of every passion—with the abandoning of this thirst, with the doing away with it, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire."

"This, O Bhikkus, is the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering: that holy eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Memory, Right Meditation."

The four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are given by the Mahavagga in the sermon at Benares as forming the sum and substance of the original announcement. What was preached at the opening of the cause is also stated in a more general way, as when we read that the Blessed one preached to an enquirer "in due course; that is to say, he talked about the merits obtained by almsgiving, about the duties of morality, about heaven, about the evils the vanity and the sinfulness of desires, and about the blessings of the abandonment of desire." Another theme frequently dwelt on was what is called "the pure and spotless Eye of the Truth; whatsoever is subject to the condition of origination is subject also to the condition of cessation." On the teaching as a whole we shall comment after the conclusion of the narrative.

The early propaganda was not of the nature of a social revolt. The doctrine, it is true, was the outcome of a universal sympathy in which the differences of class were overlooked, but the consequences of this were not dwelt upon, and both leader and

followers wished to see the order reinforced from the higher classes of society. In this they obtained their desire; for we read of the conversion of a number of members of princely houses. Gautama's own father became a convert, also his son Rahula, who asked for admission in the words, "Give me my birthright, ascetic." An order for women was founded early, at the suggestion of Gautama's own female relatives. The form of admission to the order was—

"I take my refuge in the Buddha,
I take my refuge in the Dhamma,
I take my refuge in the Samgha,"

this being twice repeated. The adherents were beggars from the very first. Instead of making the state of beggar (bhikku), the ultimate one in the religious life, to which one advanced as in the orders of Brahmanism after passing through the stages of pupil, householder and the houseless state, the converts of the Buddha became bhikkus at once, even though they were young men and had not formerly entered the religious life at all. This more than anything else brought on the founder the disapproval of the Brahmans, with whom on the whole he lived on not unfriendly terms; and this was perhaps the most serious departure he made from the ordinary usages of his country.

When sixty disciples had been gained they were sent out to spread the doctrine. The following is the address made to them on this occasion:—

"Go ye now, O Bhikkus, and wander, for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain and for the welfare of gods and men, but not two of you go the same way. Preach, O Bhikkus, the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious at the end, in the spirit and in the letter; proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness."

The injunction that the missionaries should go singly was not always observed. Their outfit and manner of proceeding with regard to lodgings was fixed already by the custom of the country, and is not set forth. They were not told to heal diseases or to cast out demons; the only benefit they were to confer lay in their doctrine, but that benefit embraced all others; he who received it found the cure of all his ills. The character of a worker of miracles is not very essential to the Buddha himself. Stories are told of his expelling a snake-demon, and doing other wonderful things; but the end in view in such cases is always that of convincing someone as to the truth of the teaching. His activity consists in the main in teaching and in nothing else.

One more extract from the early preaching may here find a place. It was spoken on a mountain to an assemblage of a thousand Bhikkus.

"Everything is burning.

"The eye is burning. With what fire is it burning? With the fire of lust, with the fire of anger, with the

fire of ignorance; it is burning with (the anxieties of) birth, decay, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair."

The ear is burning, etc. . . .
The tongue is burning . . .
The body is burning . . .
The mind is burning . . .

"Considering this, O Bhikkus, a disciple walking in the Noble Path becomes weary of the eye, etc., weary of the ear, etc. Becoming weary of all that, he divests himself of passion; by absence of passion he is made free; he becomes aware that he is made free; and he realises that re-birth is exhausted, that holiness is completed, that duty is fulfilled; and that there is no further return to this world."

About this point the narrative of the Mahavagga ceases to carry us further. Regarding the central part of the life of the Buddha we have no information; but another work, the Paranibbana Suta gives us details of his life and journeys for some time before his death. When we see him again after the long interval he is still carrying on, at the age of eighty years, the same work of propagation as before, though the stages of travel were now shorter and the rests longer. He still journeys from place to place, making some stay in the neighbourhood of large towns and preaching to those who come to hear him. Incidents are recorded which took place in localities afterwards famous on

that account, meetings with those who became disciples or with opponents or with rich people, both men and women, who were generous to the order.

Of the adversaries is to be named Gotama's cousin Devadatta, who raised a revolt within the order against the Perfect One and tried to kill him, so that he had to be silenced by sundry miracles. The story of the last days of the Saint is told in a touching way; he dies in harness in the forty-fourth year of his Buddahood, and in extreme old age, with his mental force unabated and surrounded by disciples. One of these, Ananda, who was also his cousin, was deeply attached to him and tended him with the deepest affection. A very human trait recorded of this period is that the Saint fell ill after a meal of dried pork set before him by a smith in whose grove he was staying. Very human also is the speech to Ananda when the latter sheds tears at the directions given by the Perfect One for his own obsequies. "Have I not often told you that we have to part from all that is precious and dear to us? When all that is born and has organs bears in itself the cause of its decay, how is it possible that such an one as I should escape from dissolution? That cannot be. For a long time, Ananda, you have supported me by works, words, and thoughts of love, in truth and honour, without wavering. In this you have done well, Ananda. Strive with diligence and soon you will be free from the great evils, from sensuousness, from

individuality, deceit and ignorance." The Perfected Ones of former times had each had such an attendant as Ananda, and so it would be in the future also. To the monks gathered round his dying couch he says that if any of them has any doubt or uncertainty on any point, about the Buddha, or the order, or the doctrine, now is the time to have it settled, while the teacher is still with them. None of them has any doubt, and Ananda exclaims how remarkable it is that they are all free from doubt. To this the Buddha agrees, and declares that of the five hundred present there is not one, even the least advanced among them, who is not sure that he will not be born again; they are all sure of eternal redemption.

"See now, mendicants, I exhort you, all that has come into being is in dissolution. Work out your salvation with diligence! These were the last words of the Perfected One!"

At the moment when he passed into Nirvana there was a tremendous earthquake, accompanied with thunder.

Brahma Sahampati, Indra, Ananda, and Anuruddha, another cousin, all expressed themselves in suitable verses.

The candidate for admission professes that he takes refuge in the Buddha. Now the Buddha is not a personal saviour in the Christian sense—not one who can help the believer directly and personally. Buddhism is a system of self-help, not of being

helped by others, either gods or men. The individual must learn the doctrine for himself, and apply it by his own efforts to his own case, as Gautama himself did. The Buddha is, as his name implies, an Enlightener, a Teacher, one who brings the true knowledge, by appropriating which and walking in it a man is saved. But while he leaves his followers without any promise that he will be with them, and admonishes them with his last words to work out each his own salvation by his own strength, the feeling of personal attachment to the founder is not wanting to the cause, and is doubtless one of the principal reasons of its success. The believer treads a path the Founder trod before him; the law he has to keep is the founder's achievement for him and legacy to him; in the order he is in the tabernacle of the Founder and surrounded by His friends, who also are seeking to follow Him.

"I take refuge in the Dhamma," the doctrine, is the second clause of the confession. Into this clause it is more difficult for us to enter with sympathy. Our eye has received light from a hundred other sources, and we can scarcely bring ourselves back to the attitude of those who received all the light they had from the doctrine of the Buddha. To do so in any degree we should need to abandon ourselves to that sadness which in his days possessed the mind of India, and rests on that mind still. If all life is suffering, and if even death does not bring relief, but is only a signal to pass from one existence into another equally full of suffering and pain, what help is there? Suppose our words of

gratitude spoken to the hero who took upon his own shoulders the burden of our suffering, and calls to us that the way is open from suffering to peace, what is the doctrine which we are to believe and practise as he did, and in which, if he speaks truly, our soul will find rest?

Briefly put, the doctrine is that suffering proceeds from desire, and that if desire be once cut off the fire of suffering will lack fuel, and will die and not spring up again. The principle that everything that comes into being perishes, implies as its converse that if nothing is brought into being there will be nothing to perish. The problem for conduct then is so to live that no impulse to struggle and enjoyment, with its attendant restlessness and dissatisfaction, shall remain and claim another existence in which to work itself out. When a state of entire apathy and undisturbedness has been attained, and a man is no longer annoyed by what happens without or distracted by his own passions within, when he has no wish or hope or fear remaining either as to this world or as to a future existence, then he has reached the term, he is enlightened, blessed, saved. Most men do not see that this is so: they think desire natural and inevitable, and consider that the best thing to do with desire is to satisfy it. To their eyes the evil is that they cannot get all they want, but are left with many desires unsatisfied. But when the true doctrine is accepted a man sees deeper. He sees that not the failure to satisfy his desires but the desires themselves are the evil thing and the

source of all pain and misery. To bring desire itself to an end—that is the problem for all who would attain true happiness.

This may be compared with the warning address to Christians by our Lord against letting the heart settle on the things of this world, or being anxious as to food and clothing. Christ, however, does not regard all desires as wrong, but only those which prevent us from having faith in God, or from doing our part for His kingdom and righteousness. On the other hand the measures recommended by Christ for getting rid of wrong desires are of a trenchant heroic nature to which Buddhism offers no parallel. The method prescribed in the Eight-fold Path (the fourth of the Noble Truths) for getting rid of desire and cutting off its sorrowful consequences, appears when we look at it rather commonplace and uninteresting. No great sacrifices are asked ; the way of asceticism is expressly rejected. What is wanted in order not to lay up any evil which will have to be atoned in another existence, is a course of steady and careful self-control which avoids extremes, guards itself incessantly against surprise and keeps every part of life in its proper place, every faculty in its due activity. There is to be—

1. Right belief, without superstition or delusion.
2. Right aspiration, after such things as the earnest man cares for.
3. Right speech, *i.e.* friendly and sincere.
4. Right conduct, *i.e.* peaceable, honourable and pure.

5. Right means of livelihood, *i.e.* a pursuit which does not involve the taking or injuring of life.

6. Right endeavour, *i.e.* self-restraint and watchfulness.

7. Right memory, *i.e.* not forgetting at any time what we ought to remember; presence of mind.

8. Right meditation, *i.e.* earnest occupation with the problems of life.

If this is the practical method to be followed in seeking salvation—and the Eight-fold Path is not only for those who have forsaken the world but for all followers of the Buddha—then a formal and serious air is spread over life. The religion is marked as one of the law rather than of the spirit, its adherents accept the yoke not indeed of a minute written code, but of a traditional standard of conduct which is never to be departed from. Further study of the system confirms this impression; the Buddhist is a self-conscious being who is supplied with a great number of rules for his behaviour, and feels it necessary to do even the most trifling act with seriousness and deliberation, remembering the end it is to serve, and the mental attitude in which it ought to be done by an enlightened person.

We cannot enter further into the doctrine of Buddhism. It presents some difficult problems. As we have stated the system it is deeply rooted in the doctrine of transmigration, and if that belief were discarded would lose its principal motive. But the Buddha is made to teach that the human soul has

no independent existence; it is simply the congeries of the various powers and faculties, as a carriage is made up of wheels, pole, seat, etc. That this is inconsistent with the transmigration of the soul from one organism to another is evident, and the efforts to adjust this inconsistency give rise to much confusion. The precise meaning of Nirvana in Buddhism is also a matter of much debate. The reader of the foregoing pages will be under the impression that Nirvana belongs to the future, and is the state of unconsciousness never to be broken any more, on which the perfected believer enters at death. But there is also a Nirvana which is attained in this life, viz., the state of entire passionlessness which the Buddha himself enjoyed and which occurs wherever desire and restlessness have come to an end. In this case death only seals what is already won, there is no return after it into life's fever and annoyance. Whether the Nirvana after death implies the total cessation of all life and knowledge or only a state of blessedness, removed from all agitation and desire, Buddhism does not decide.

The third sentence of the confession is, "I take refuge in the Samgha, the order." Of this not much more need here be said. Monks formed a recognised order in India before Buddhism, and their tasks and privileges were well understood. It was only in the order that the perfect life according to the doctrine could be lived, and the system is addressed in the first place to those who make the renunciation and

devote themselves as begging monks to the attainment of salvation. In this view the religion is undoubtedly a selfish one, making it a man's chief care so to live that he shall escape from existence as speedily as possible. With this care, however, is coupled the more generous task of preaching the doctrine to others so that they also may escape from ignorance and enter on the path. Where the missionary spirit is absent from the order, there is undoubtedly a lapse from its original truth, from the sublime and all-embracing compassion which moved its founder. At the same time, it is the individual in whom Buddhism is interested, not society. In its eyes the world is evil, and the idea of saving the world is not entertained. All illusion and disappointment as it is, one can but hope soon to have done with it for ever, and thus the notion of improving the world and by degrees transforming it into something better, is quite absent, and Buddhism is devoid of that union of religion with public zeal which works so powerfully in Christianity. It is in its ideals a religion for recluses and for pessimists; it despairs of society, and only seeks to rescue out of it as many as possible select souls.

In practice, however, Buddhism is not even in its earliest stage nearly so much a stranger to the world as the theory might seem to require. The Buddha mingled freely in his lifetime with people of all ranks and characters, and sought in his calm wise way to do them good and to show them the higher things

that were within their reach. His religion, in the same way, has not only monks but also adherents who remain in the world and work at their calling. These, it is true, cannot attain salvation directly; it is only through the life of the ascetic that one can draw near to the higher and the final stages of the path. But by following the Teacher so far as their position admits and keeping the rules set by the religion for them, they may advance to some extent and draw somewhat nearer to the ultimate goal. Buddhist morality is based on the notion of the equality of all; respect is to be paid to all living beings. The five rules of righteousness which are binding on all followers of the Buddha are—

1. Not to kill any living being.
2. Not to take that which is not given.
3. To refrain from adultery.
4. To speak no untruth.
5. To abstain from all intoxicating liquors.

To these are added five more for the members of the order, who are also required to refrain from all sexual intercourse, viz.:

1. Not to eat after midday.
2. Not to be present at dancing, singing, music or plays.
3. Not to use wreaths, scents, ointments or personal adornments.
4. Not to use a high or a broad bed.
5. To possess no silver or gold.

A religion which thus upholds the standard of self-

control, truthfulness, purity, sensitive regard for all living creatures; which teaches its adherents to hold worldly pleasure and success in moderate esteem, and to aim at goodness and wisdom as the chief treasure of life, must be thought to be no small blessing to mankind. The devotional literature of Buddhism, contained in the Dhammapada, the Sutta-Nipata, and other books, teaches the widest toleration towards others, and a delicate conscientiousness towards oneself. Their grave simplicity and their quiet enthusiasm for the best things in human life, make them worthy to be known and studied even by Christians. A few sentences only can be given.

From the Dhammapada:

Not to blame, not to strike, to live restrained under the law, to be moderate in eating, to sleep and sit alone, and to dwell on the highest thoughts, this is the teaching of the awakened.

. . . . . .

Let no man love anything; loss of the beloved is evil. Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters.

. . . . . .

Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth!

Speak the truth, do not yield to anger; give, if thou art asked; by these three steps thou wilt go near the gods.

The sages who injure no one, and who always con-

trol their body, they will go to the unchangeable place (Nirvana) where, if they have gone, they will suffer no more.

. . . . . .

The following are from the Sutta-Nipata:

Wishing for the destruction of desire (*i.e.* Nirvana), being careful, no fool, learned, strenuous, considerate, restrained, energetic, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros.

Cultivating in due time kindness, equanimity, compassion, deliverance, and rejoicing with others, unobstructed by the whole world, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros.

Having abandoned both passion and hatred and folly, having rent the ties, not trembling at the loss of life, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros.

. . . . . .

The Buddha, meeting with a farmer at his work is reproached that he does not plough nor sow for his living. He replies that he does plough and sow. Asked to explain, he says:

Faith is the seed, penance the rain, understanding my yoke and plough, modesty the pole of the plough, mind the tie, thoughtfulness my ploughshare and goad.

I am guarded in respect of the body, I am guarded in respect of speech, temperate in food; I make truth to cut away weeds, tenderness is my deliverance.

. . . . . .

Buddhism has generally been spoken about as

a revolt against the hard priestly system of the Brahmans, as a protest against the intolerance of caste and against the extravagances of ritual. We have not so spoken of it in this sketch, as scholars now see Buddhism to have been the direct and natural outcome of the system which preceded it. The "rhinoceros" of the extract above cannot disown kindred with the forest-dweller of Brahmanism, the begging monk was no new figure in India; the doctrine of self-abnegation, and the doctrine of Nirvana, were both prepared for in older Indian thought. If a more direct proof were wanted that Buddhism is a development not a revolt, it can be pointed out in the fact that a sect extremely like it, and sharing most of its doctrines and its practices, flourished in India at the same time with it. So great is the similarity between *Jainism* and Buddhism that some scholars have declared Jainism to be Buddhism under another name, and among those who consider them to have been independent of each other some have held that Jainism borrowed from Buddhism, but others that Buddhism was the borrower.

Mahavira (great hero) the founder of the Jainist sect, was like Gautama in his possession of several names, in his princely birth, his early renunciation of wealth and comfort, his wandering life, his collection of disciples, his order of monks, his attainment to the rank and title of a superior being; for he was the twenty-fourth of the Jinas. While his doctrine has a family resemblance to that of Gautama it differs from

the latter in important respects, which space forbids us to enumerate. It was harsher and ruder; but what we are concerned to point out is that the emergence at the same time of two movements so closely akin proves that they were called for.

Buddhism, with all its merits, fails to supply all that man wants in a religion. Both it and Jainism put attachment to a founder and observance of his rule in place of the worship of gods and the ordinances of external piety. But man asks more from his religion, and we find that both the Buddha and the Jina were themselves made objects of worship by their followers, so that the rites of sacrifice and prayer came in to the very centre of the system which had at first dispensed with them. Buddhism does not absorb a man's entire devotion; he can be a Buddhist and go on adhering to the religion of the country he lives in; in China, for example, he can be a Confucianist or a Taoist and a Buddhist also. In this the system shows the lack of energy which belonged to it at first, and from which it has never become free.

IV

Summary and Conclusion

We have attempted to set forth in such a way as our limits allow, the beginnings and the principles of the great religions which have made their appearance in India. For those who find the subject interesting

and wish to pursue it further, a list of works is added at the close of this volume which may enable them to do so. If this little book fulfils for any of its readers the office of a sign-post, pointing out for him the way to those greater stores of knowledge, it will have fulfilled its aim. Before concluding we would ask a question, which must already have suggested itself to the reader, as to the relation these different religions have borne towards one another in history and their relative positions at the present day. To answer these questions fully would involve a study of the whole history of Indian religion, a history as vast and complex as that of Christianity itself. Only a few hints are offered here according to what we said when we set out, as to the presence in Indian religion till now of elements which have been in it from the beginning.

We have seen how the religion of Brahmanism arose naturally out of the simple old Vedic worship and partly incorporated partly supplanted it. The hymns and sacrifices went on when an entirely new meaning had been poured into them, and without any breach of continuity the elaborate organisation of the sacred caste, with its inspired books and its divine ritual, took the place of the old customary worship administered by the father, or the head of the tribe. The relations of Vedism and Brahmanism to each other are thus quite clear.

In the case of Brahmanism and Buddhism it is different. Buddhism is a denial of all that Brahmanism believes, a rejection of all its practices. Buddhism

recognises no gods, at least it looks to no god to give man what he wants. It utters no prayers, offers no sacrifices, it recognises no sacred class of men as necessary, it does not depend on any of the Vedas. All these are cheerfully relinquished. We should expect that a system like this, which amounted to religious Nihilism, could never live at peace with the system it discarded and denied.

Yet the two did dwell in peace together. Buddhism was too well prepared for in the old religion to appear as an entire enemy when the time of its actual birth arrived. The speculation out of which it arose had as we saw, long been at home in Brahmanism, and had even been present in the temple and at the sacrifices. The higher mind of India was quite prepared to make a clean sweep of all religious doctrines, in which it had ceased to find any substantial support. As at the present day the enlightened ask for a religion without miracles or metaphysics, in which no exorbitant demands are made on the understanding, so it was in India then. Many were ready to accept a religion which took its stand, as did the teaching of Gautama, on the facts of conscience and experience, and asked for no exercise of faith in gods who were behind the age. As Mr Rhys Davids has shown,[1] Buddhism is in some respects an anticipation of the experimental position of our own day in which nothing is accepted that is not verifiable. Its creed consists simply in

[1] "Buddhism as a Living Force," Professor T. W. Rhys Davids, in *Hibbert Journal*, April 1903.

the statement of psychological facts. The facts in question might not be universally admitted at the present day; but the mind of India in Gautama's time was agreed about them, and Buddhism thus had a positive basis which all recognised. That there was a way out from the prison of suffering in which it was the settled conviction of Indian thought that all men were confined, this was Gautama's discovery, and the method he announced had in it nothing that was strange or startling for his age. That man had no one to look to but himself in the efforts he was called to make for self-emancipation, the higher minds of India had agreed long before Gautama, and the implicit declarations of Buddhism, not flaunted by the founder before his hearers, but clearly implied in all his teaching, that man has no saviour, either human or divine outside himself, but must be saved, if at all, by the efforts of his own will, this also shocked no one. On the contrary, such a doctrine appealed powerfully to a race which was determined to know the truth and to walk in its light alone.

And more—the exhortation to believe that it was in the power of man to deal with the cause of his misery which lay nowhere but in himself, and by a life of patient and unwearying effort to deal with his own case and ultimately to effect his own cure, this exhortation was strengthened indefinitely by the example of the founder himself. The figure of the Buddha is the strength and the secret of Buddhism as that of Christ is of Christianity. Gautama had himself passed

through the sadness of human experience which was the lot of all, he had spent his life in persuading as many as possible to follow him in the path of deliverance. Gautama was one whom no seriously disposed person in India could fail to reverence. He had wrestled long and hard with the dark problem of human destiny as it then presented itself, and by his own strength of mind had made his way out of the prison to light and freedom. He had, moreover, spent a long life in entire unselfishness; not content with saving himself he had laboured day by day and year by year to old age and death at the task of bringing to others the light he had found himself and guiding them to the right way. He had not been a worker of miracles; the few wonders related of him were done to prove the truth of his doctrine, which to him was by far the most important thing, he had acknowledged the authority of the eternal laws under which man spends his life on the earth, and had sought only such a deliverance for himself and others as these laws allow. He had been tender-hearted and compassionate, he had been most catholic in his sympathies and accessible to all. Himself of noble birth he had disregarded the barriers of class; he had been the equal both of kings and beggars, and Brahmans had consulted him, some had even been his followers. And his doctrine was for all, it excluded none but appealed to all who bore the general human nature.

In these ways Buddhism was singularly well adapted to the country and the period in which it appeared.

It rapidly overspread the Indian peninsula and became within two centuries after the death of the founder the prevailing religion of that great land. The history of its early struggles and successes is to a large extent unknown. As in the case of Christianity the bright period of the origins is succeeded by a period of historical obscurity. We hear of various councils at which the canon of the sacred books was fixed and the constitution of the order further settled and defined. Asoka, King of Magadha, or Behar, in the third century B.C., was the Constantine of the new faith. The edicts which he issued declaring Buddhism to be the religion of the State, and enjoining upon his subjects to live in accordance with its precepts, were engraved on columns in public places in many districts. Some of these have been deciphered during the last century, and we see how the Emperor used his authority to set forth Buddhist doctrines in his own words, and how he decreed that missionaries should go forth to other lands to convert unbelievers. This was to be done only by the peaceful means of persuasion, and in this the character of Buddhism, its enthusiasm for human welfare, its universal scope, its gentle temper, were truly expressed. The religion spread rapidly to countries beyond India, on the one side to Ceylon and thence to Burmah, on the other to Afghanistan. In later centuries it was to pass also to Tibet and to China.

But it is not to be supposed that when Buddhism became the state religion of India the Brahmans gave

up their sacrifices or the learned the study of the Vedas, or the religious after the old fashion the practice of self-absorption. The new faith was too tolerant to require this and the two systems were in fact rather complementary of each other than antagonistic. Buddhism has never claimed that those who join it should forsake the religion to which they are already attached. The old and the new went on in India side by side, and we find that even after the rise of Buddhism Brahmanism met with developments which showed that it was by no means dead or wanting in power to assert itself. Much of the Vedic literature is later than Buddhism; this is the case with most of the Upanishads and with the Sutras. The institutions of the old religion were carefully studied as before, the old books were supplied with new comments and explanations. It has to be specially noted that the system of caste became much more developed and more stringent than it had been in the period of Gautama, and that the systems of law, such as that of Manu, in which everything turns on caste are also of later growth, a growth which never could have taken place if the new teaching to which all men are alike as sufferers and as capable of emancipation had been universally accepted. Buddhism, though it rose to power, did not use its power to persecute its opponents. It was and is of the very nature of Buddhism to be tolerant of other creeds; and as the Brahmans were not only the priests of India, but its lawyers, its literati, and

its men of science they occupied a very strong position. The two religions existed therefore side by side for many centuries, neither interfering with the other, the Brahmans preponderating in one district, while another was given over to the monks. Chinese Buddhists went on pilgrimage to India in the fifth century A.D. to study their religion in its native land and to bring home relics; and they found the priests and the monks enjoying the same honour in the country, the temple and the monastery standing together. Another Chinese pilgrimage to India took place in the seventh century, at which period the two faiths were in more active competition with each other, Brahmanism being by this time more aggressive. In some states Buddhism was actively favoured by the ruler; but even in these Brahmanism asserted itself and secured some portion of state recognition.

Two religions so intimately connected with each other and working in this way side by side could not fail to influence each other. Competition and controversy between religious systems always make each of them conscious, not only of the errors of the adversary, but also of its own weak points, so that an interchange of ideas and practices constantly goes on. The conflict of Brahmanism with Buddhism accordingly led to great changes on both sides, in fact the old Brahmanism and the old Buddhism disappeared. Hinduism, the present religion of India, is not identical with either but may be regarded as a mixture of both.

The most salient difference between the religion

of India before Buddhism and that after it is to be found in the disappearance from most worships of animal sacrifice, which in the earlier practice filled a very large place. This is in accordance with the Buddhist prohibition of the destruction of life, and is part of that tenderness towards all living things which is now characteristic of all Indian thought. Along with this we have to recognise to how large a degree both the beliefs of Buddhism and its spirit passed into the general religion of India. The convictions which Buddhism if it did not originate then, yet first applied with seriousness and made into a rule of human duty, that the human person is infinitely responsible for its conduct in life, has to accomplish its lot through a series of transmigrations, and may through steadfast efforts of the will turn back to some extent the current formed by its past and effect at least the beginnings of its own salvation, these convictions became the working theory of the personal religion of serious people in India. The genius of Gautama prevailed even in regions where his name was not confessed. His humane, gentle, brotherly spirit, his love of truth, his disposition to help the thoughtful by thinking, the man of the world by his practical wisdom, the simple by his unaffected sympathy, all this, inherent no doubt in the Indian mind before but embodied in him to an unparalleled degree, became typical for all his countrymen, and a determining force in all their piety.

On the other hand Buddhism could not supply all

that is asked of a religion, and while infusing its spirit into the mind of India, died out itself in the country of its birth. A system which does not acknowledge any divine beings, nor offer any prayers or any sacrifices, is not fitted to be the religion of entire communities of men. For the members of the order, the original rule and the original doctrine might long suffice, but where Buddhism had to fulfil the office of a public religion it had to submit to great modifications and to assume features which had little connection with its original state. It developed observances of its own, especially the veneration of sacred places to which men went on pilgrimage to adore the footsteps of the Buddha or of his companions. In time the deification of the Buddha took place and legends grew up of his birth from a virgin mother, and of his resolution while living in heaven to go down to the earth and be the Saviour of men. These additions as well as the formation of a canon of inspired books gave the system more of the nature of an organised religion; but on the other hand the order failed to keep up its early enthusiasm and strict discipline, and so grew weak within. The final cessation of Buddhism in India is generally ascribed to the persecution of the order by the Mohammedan invaders in the seventh and succeeding centuries; but it was all but extinct before. Gautama himself had predicted that his movement would not prove permanent, and had looked for the appearance of another Buddha in a future period who would make the truth

known to men again. The continuance of Buddhism in countries outside of India is scarcely such as to make this hope superfluous. In Tibet Buddhism is hierarchical in form, mechanical in its application; in China a Buddhist may also be a Confucianist or a Taoist, and the system is without living influence.

As is the case in every country where civilisation has gone on a long time, the religion of India contains an infinite number of elements, some going back to pre-historic times, others due to causes which are known. When the missionary seeks to take stock of the luxuriant and complex growth of Indian religion, or when the student anxious to know something of the aspirations of our Eastern fellow-subjects, asks what Indian religion is now, the answer must be, so far as one can tell who knows India only from books, that every kind of devotion which ever flourished in India flourishes there still. The lower forms, which prevailed before the Aryans came into the peninsula are still to be seen. The higher forms have not brought the lower to an end, nor on the other hand have the lower forms stifled the higher. The student of the world's religions knows that nothing of this sort that has once truly lived ever altogether dies, and India is no exception to this rule. India has never attained to any religious uniformity; her various tribes never became united politically and have never been brought under any organised religious authority. Toleration and respect for all human life and thought have there-

fore prevailed; and the most dissimilar beliefs and rites have continued side by side for thousands of years. The primitive jungle, to use an appropriate metaphor, of freely growing primitive superstition, still continues. In country districts it is not the great gods of Hinduism that are worshipped, but gods of the locality who are less ancient. New deities are constantly arising and crowd each other out in endless succession. There is an active belief in a multitude of spirits, with whose agency everything that happens is readily connected, and who may be influenced or thwarted by curious and primitive methods. Incantations and charms are used and ceremonies the original meaning of which is matter of speculation, and every place has its own legendary lore.

From this jungle the great religions raise their heads. What may be called the official and historical religion is seated in the great temples throughout the land, and has for its ministers a priesthood of great dignity and influence. Connected with this religion as of old is the study of the sacred books, the learned explanation of the cultus, the pursuit of philosophy and learning, and the practice of mysticism. The gods are changed; it is Vishnu and Siva that now divide the multitudes between them; but there has been no breach with the past. Hinduism is devoid of any missionary impulse, it could not flourish anywhere but in India; but on its native soil it has all the advantages of venerable antiquity of firmly-established authority, and of connection with every

part of the social and the intellectual life of the land. If the gods are losing their hold on the higher minds of the people, that is a phenomenon not unknown in other lands and other faiths. The system with all its splendid and elaborate institutions, goes on in spite of this, and will go on, no one can tell how long. With this system regarded as a set of rites and institutions it is difficult for the native of another country to enter into any active sympathy, even did it not present features which are immoral and disgusting. Its history may interest him deeply and the living manifestation of genuine piety whether by people or by priest is always a touching thing to one who can pierce through to discern it; yet the beholder of Indian religion must judge that in its forms it is too heavy a burden to be borne by any open-minded people, and that the time of its reform must surely be at hand. The rise of the Brahma-Samaj (Society of God) with its theistic and humanitarian teaching, shows that the established religion fails to meet the wants of the higher minds in India; and with the increase of education this must be the case more and more.

But we must recognise that it is the machinery, the institutions of Indian religion that are at fault, and that the soul of the religion is in many respects kindred to the soul of our own. What of it is due to Buddhism and to the movements out of which Buddhism arose must be regarded by every open mind as admirable. In its love of truth, its toleration, its

broad human sympathies; in its explicit preference of conduct to ritual, its high estimate of personal responsibility, its readiness to make the interests of the soul supreme in human life, and to undertake any sacrifice by which these interests may be furthered, in all these respects Indian religion needs no other teaching. Every one who has a heart must wonder at the age-long discipline and education by which the higher mind of a race has been so trained to prefer the things of the spirit to the things of the world or of the flesh. Here the Christian must feel in sympathy with Indian piety; for the Master says, He that is not against Me is for Me.

Yet we can sympathise with Indian thought without shutting our eyes to its grave defects. These very defects no doubt have contributed in past times to the success of the Buddhist element of it, and may even help it to a revival not only in India but in other lands, so that the prediction of Mr Rhys Davids may be fulfilled, that Buddhism will come to have its representatives in every country. A religion which calls for so little positive belief may share in this age the victories of agnosticism. A piety which is built on the basis of human experience only and requires no faith in any objective spiritual reality behind the world of sense, which dispenses with prayer and needs no temple, such a piety has great qualifications for maintaining itself and even extending its influence at the present day.

But the defects which led to the decease of

Buddhism in its own land must also limit the success of Indian thought, both in India and elsewhere. Religion without belief in a living god can never prove a source of vigour to any people. Religion in its full sense is an active intercourse between God and man; he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Without this faith religion must feel itself defective and must lack inspiring force. The belief which Christianity affords in a god who cares for man for man's own sake, who is favourable to human freedom and human progress, and has united Himself with man and poured new life into mankind in Jesus Christ, this belief has power to renew individuals and nations. The bright day is surely coming when this belief will enter into the mind of India also.

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